AN EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF TRANSITIONING FROM A PROGRAM BASED DESIGN TO A PROCESS CENTERED DESIGN FOR DISCIPLE MAKING ON CHURCH HEALTH AND GROWTH

A THESIS-PROJECT

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In dedication to my wife, my children,

my mom, the rest of my family,

and to all those with whom I have served in ministry.

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ABBREVIATIONS

LDP	Life Development Process
NCD	Natural Church Development
PBD	Program Based Design
PCD	Process Centered Design

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ABSTRACT

This thesis-project is an exploration of the impact of transitioning from a program-based design to a process centered design for disciple making upon church health and growth. Special attention is given to the role of small groups, gift-oriented service, and structures as they were identified as sources of significant weakness by internal and external consultation. The hypothesis is that such a transition will lead to positive measurable outcomes in spiritual health and numerical growth.

INTRODUCTION

Since Jesus Christ has commanded the church to make disciples of all nations, Aubrey Malphurs has rightly noted that the "church's role is to design a disciple-maturing process that the Holy Spirit may use in concert with a community of believers to accomplish this (task)."[1] The purpose of this project will be two-fold. First, it will be an assessment of how faithful and effective West Highland Baptist Church, in Hamilton, Ontario, has been to this calling. Secondly, it will be proposed that greater faithfulness and effectiveness to this calling can be achieved by re-visioning key systems and structures within the church.[2]

In chapter one we will consider the current setting and reality of West Highland Church. It will be asserted that West Highland is a Program Based Design (PBD) church that does not consistently produce mature disciples of Jesus Christ. The proposed solution to this problem is to transition from a PBD to a Process Centered Design (PCD) for disciple making. Special attention will be given to the roles of loving relationships, gift-based service, and effective structures as they were identified as sources of significant weakness by internal and external consultation.

Chapter two will clarify the biblical and theological principles that are important to the discussion. More specifically, we will set forth the basic definitions and concepts of discipleship that are relevant to the topic at hand. These definitions will serve as a framework, or point of reference, for our understanding of what it means to be a disciple and a disciple maker. Space will be given to provide clarity of key concepts such as community, process, relational environments, and by defining the basic terms of discussion.

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[1] Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st – Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 199.

[2] Baker, Rick. "Culture quake: A Strategy for Transforming an Established Church Culture by Re-visioning Key Systems." D.Min. diss., Liberty Baptist University Theological Seminary, 2015, p.5.

In chapter three various authoritative authors on the process of discipleship will be brought into conversation with one another and with the reader. Each of their processes will be summarized and analyzed as they relate to the content and methodology of the project. The interaction with these authors will be critical in nature, and points of agreement and disagreement will be noted with the goal of finding a process that is both biblical and functional within the context of West Highland Church.

The purpose of chapter four is to provide a description of the project design. Details will be provided about the tools and methods that were used to execute the project and assess the various ministries of the church. The assessment will consider the effectiveness of the current outreach and discipleship efforts, major areas of weakness, and emerging opportunities and strategies to address these weaknesses.

The final chapter will consider the outcomes of the project and will draw conclusions. Much of this chapter will be based on interpretations of the data from both pre- and post-assessments. It will also look at measurements from changes that have occurred since the first assessment was completed. If the hypothesis was correct, then West Highland should be a healthier church as a result of the transition (or partial transition) from a PBD to a PCD for disciple making.

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

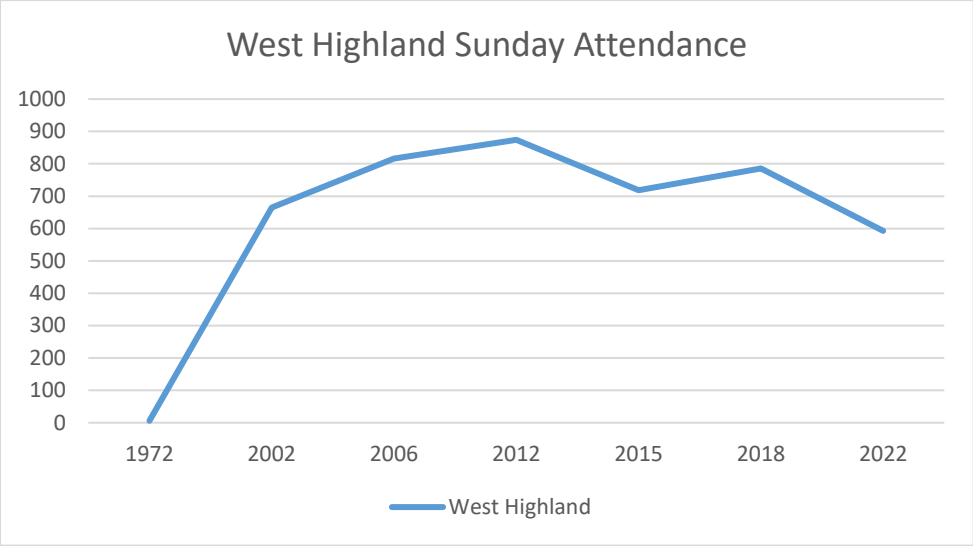
If you do not know where you are, you cannot get to where you want to go. This truth is demonstrated when we use google maps (or any other map) to get directions. In order to get directions, we must enter the starting point and the destination because directions are always relative to your current location.

The same is true when it comes to organizations and their vision. Organizations that are not in touch with reality are unable to get "directions" that will lead them to their preferred picture of the future. To echo leadership guru Max Dupree, "the first task of leadership is defining reality; from that light comes the challenging task of determining a leadership vision."[1] Defining reality empowers leaders to identify what is working and what is not, and to make the necessary changes to reach the goal. A brief survey of West Highland church from its inception until 2022 will help provide an accurate picture of the church's current reality.

In March of 1972, six couples attending Elliot Heights Baptist Church on Hamilton Ontario's east mountain sensed a call to establish an evangelical church to reach a growing population on the west mountain. From 1972 to 2002 the church grew from six couples to an average Sunday attendance of 665 Sunday morning attendees. Church attendance continued to grow over the next decade, peaking in 2012 with an average weekly attendance of 874. Since that time church attendance plateaued and then went into decline (see Figure 1) with an average Sunday attendance of 576 in 2022. There was a moderate uptick of 68 people between 2015 and 2018.

[1] Edmund Chan, *A Certain Kind: Intentional Disciplemaking That Redefines Success In Ministry* (Covenant Evangelical Free Church, Singapore, 2013), 66. Author does not cite source for this quotation.

Figure 1: West Highland Sunday Attendance



It must be noted that a church's average weekly attendance number does not accurately reflect the total number of people connected to the church. Thom Rainer conducted a poll that asked churches two questions, "1) what is the average weekly worship attendance of your church; and 2) what would the attendance be if everyone who attends your church showed up at the same time?" The result was a median increase in worship attendance of 64%.[2] This polling data was an accurate description of West Highland in May of 2021, when the church had an average weekly attendance of 800, but 1318 people listed in their directory.[3] This is a 63% difference.

However, between May of 2021 and March of 2023, the number of people listed in the directory dropped to 1025, which is a net loss of 293 people. Of the 293, the church is aware of the reason for the departure of 154 individuals (moving, death, etc.), while 139 left for reasons unknown. If we take the average attendance of 2022 which is 593 people and

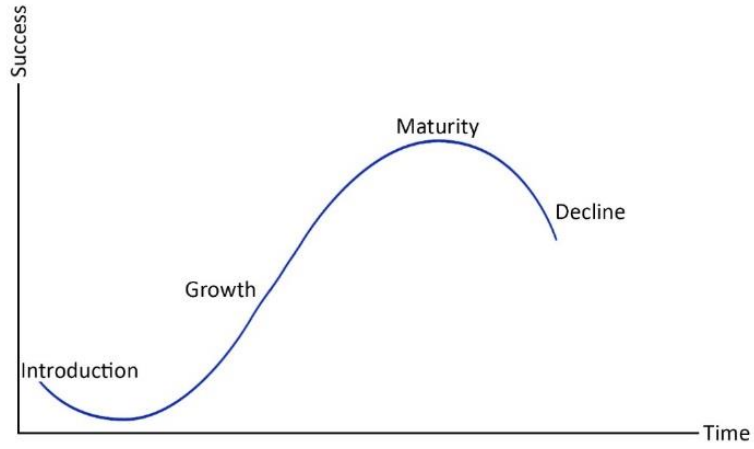
[2] Thom S. Rainer, "What if all of Church Attendees Showed Up at the Same Time?" *Church Answers*, 2020. accessed on May 5, 2021. https://churchanswers.com/blog/what-if-all-our-church-attendees-showed-up-at-the-same-time-five-thoughts/. In the article, Rainer comments that "though our social media poll was not scientific, the large number of responses we received was indicative of the interest on this topic. We asked church leaders to provide us with two numbers. The first was average weekly attendance before the pandemic. The second was the estimated attendance if everyone showed up at the same time."

[3] West Highland updates the directory annually by adding new members and removing those who have either communicated that they have moved, or have been absent for twelve months.

apply that to Rainer's polling, we find that only 57% of those in the directory are attending church on any given weekend. This is a drop of 6% of West Highland's previous attendance ratio.

A comparison of the graph of West Highland's attendance history with the Sigmoid Curve (see Figure 2)[4] reveals that West Highland is in a state of decline and in need of revitalization. The Sigmoid Curve "represents the natural development of one's personal life and relationships. It also represents the natural development of biological systems, institutions, worldviews, civilizations, and organizations including the church."[5]

Figure 2: Growth as a Sigmoid Curve



West Highland's position on the Sigmoid curve raises two critical questions that need to be addressed: What is the cause of this congregational decline? And, what, if anything, can be done about it? The answer to these questions will be touched upon in this chapter but addressed more fully in subsequent chapters.

In his book, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, Aubrey Malphurs provides hope for declining churches when he states that such churches can circumvent decline and death by

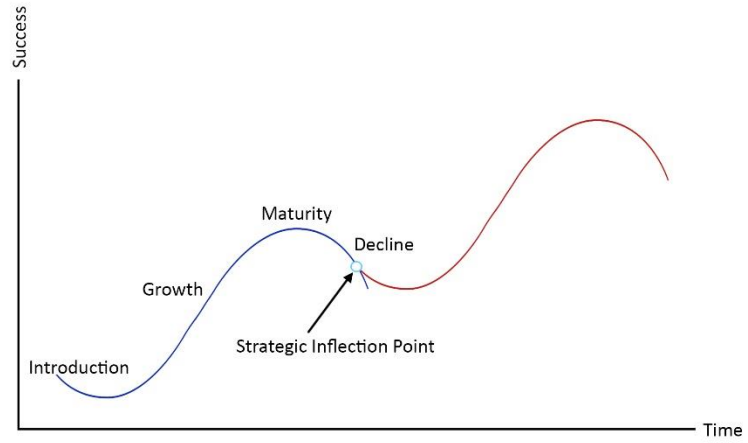
[4] Image adapted from image at Sigmoid-Curve-2, Retirement Benefits Institute Inc., December 28, 2018, Accessed March 21, 2023, https://retireinstitute.com/reinventing-yourself/sigmoid-curve-2/

[5] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 10.

empowering "gifted leaders of churches and denominations (to) start new S-curves."[6] A new S-Curve is a strategic initiative that stimulates an upsurge in growth. Some examples would be re-location, a new vision or strategy, or a new small group ministry.

There are three contexts in which to start a new S-curve. The first is church planting. This was the response of the first Christians to the Great Commission. The second context is church growth. In this scenario, a new S-curve is introduced into "an existing church before it plateaus"[7] in order to ensure continued growth. The last context is that of church revitalization. In this scenario a new S-curve is started during the stage where the church has plateaued or is in declension (See Figure 3). Revitalization is the most difficult of the three options and is the least likely to succeed.

Figure 3: Revitalization as a New Sigmoid Curve



The success of a new S-curve requires "a strategic planning process along with leaders or navigators who can effectively lead their churches through the process."[8] Without the proper people, planning, and implementation, it will be very difficult to launch and sustain a new S-curve.

[6] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning,* 11.
[7] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning,* 12.
[8] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning,* 15.

The Problem

So, what is the cause of West Highland's congregational plateau and decline? Fundamentally, it is rooted in a faulty understanding of how disciples are made. This is manifested in what Ralph Neighbour refers to as the "Program Based Design" approach to disciple making.[9] The PBD mistakenly assumes that the impartation of truth results in spiritual transformation. This leads to churches defining discipleship predominantly "in terms of providing new believers with Bible knowledge,"[10] and programs as the primary vehicle through which knowledge is delivered.

Commenting on this philosophy of ministry, authors Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck argue that "if knowledge equated [transformation],[11] our churches would be filled with [transformed disciples] as knowledge is frequently dispensed in many churches every week."[12] A brief survey of the spiritual landscape of Western Christianity reveals that spiritual transformation is not taking place on a broad scale. Church historian, Philip Jenkins, notes that "in 1900 Europe was home to two-thirds of the world's Christian population; today, the figure is about 25 percent, and by 2025 it will fall below 20 percent."[13] In the United States, Pew Research Center telephone surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019, found that 65% of American adults describe themselves as Christians when asked about their religion, down 12 percent over the past decade.[14]

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[9] Ralph Neighbour, *Where Do We Go From Here?* (Houston, TX: Touch Publications, 1990), 65.

[10] J.D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2009), 111.

[11] Geiger and Peck are writing about leadership development in their book, however, they define leadership as advanced discipleship, so I have changed the word for the purposes of contextualization.

[12] Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead* (Nashville, TN: B2H Publishing Group, 2016), 163.

[13] Philip Jenkins, *The New Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2.

[14]" In US, Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace", *Pew Research Center*, October 17, 2019, Accessed March 24, 2023, www.pewresearch.org/religion/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/

Recently, a chorus of voices has begun to call out the inadequacies of the PBD disciple making philosophy. George Barna, in his book *Growing True Disciples*, states that the contemporary church has "defined 'discipleship' as head knowledge rather than complete transformation."[15] Pastor and author Jim Putman asserts that "far too many of us assume that discipleship is merely the transfer of information leading to behavior modification."[16] Leadership mentor, Edmund Chan, sums it up best when he states that "there is a false assumption that has greatly hindered discipleship and grossly truncated spiritual maturity. It is the false assumption that truth changes lives."[17]

In contrast to the PBD philosophy stands the Process Centred Design (PCD). This philosophy of disciple making views discipleship as a process that happens in the context of relational environments where knowledge, experience, and coaching converge. [18] It "starts with the question 'Who are you?' rather than 'What is to be covered?' It is person-oriented rather than programme-oriented."[19] The process centered approach seeks to balance relationship and intentionality and measures success not by the size of your building, budgets, and attendance figures, but by the spiritual health of the congregation.

The Hypothesis

West Highland will become a healthier disciple making church if it transitions from a PBD to a PCD for disciple making. Special emphasis will be given to the role of systems, structures, small groups, and gift-oriented service in the disciple making process, since these were identified as areas of significant weakness for West Highland through external and internal consultation. The premise is that this transition will serve as a new "S-Curve" that will create spiritual health which will stimulate an upsurge in growth.

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[15] Chan, *A Certain Kind*, 99.

[16] Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington, *Discipleshift*: *Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids, Mi: Zondervan, 2013), 49.

[17] Chan, *A Certain Kind,* 117.

[18] Geiger and Peck, *Designed to Lead,* 164.

[19] Chan, *A Certain Kind,* 133.

The negative implications of the PBD cannot be properly understood until set within the context of a church culture. This philosophy of ministry permeates every facet of church life from its systems and structures to the way it measures success and to its methodology surrounding evangelism and discipleship. It is only by observing its effects upon the various facets of church life that we can truly grasp the comprehensive and limiting nature of this approach to making disciples.

Before looking at how the PBD manifests itself in various facets of church life, it will prove helpful to consider how we got to the place where discipleship is defined predominantly as the acquisition of Bible knowledge.

How Did We Get Here?

How did we get to the point where many churches in the West embrace the PBD for disciple making? This ministry philosophy did not emerge from a vacuum. On the contrary, it has deep historical roots that go back a few centuries. Therefore, the PBD cannot be assessed in isolation but must rather be interpreted in light of a much wider revolution of thought that transpired between the 18th and 20th centuries. Remarking on the influence of this era upon the church, historian Ian Shaw writes, "During the period 1789-1914 Christianity faced some of the most profound challenges since the time of the apostles, engaging with issues of great significance, many of which the contemporary church continues to wrestle with."[20]

British historian Brian Tierney echoes this sentiment about the Industrial Revolution, stating that this time period "drastically altered all the old relationships—economic, political, and social—and has led to new conditions and problems with which we are still wrestling

[20] Ian Shaw, *Churches Revolutions and Empires* (Cornwall, England: Christian Focus Publications, 2012), 9.

today."[21] The purpose of the following section will be to identify some of the challenges brought about by this time period, and to explain how they have influenced the thought and practice of the PBD for disciple making.

Commenting on the need to explore the past in order to understand the present, historian Carl Trueman writes: "All historical phenomena have a genealogy, a story that stretches back in time and makes their emergence and their cultural dominance comprehensible."[22] Once we understand how the past has influenced the present, it is possible to make the necessary changes so that a healthy disciple making process can be implemented. In Trueman's view "understanding the times is a precondition of responding appropriately to the times. And understanding the times requires a knowledge of the history that has led up to the present."[23]

While it would be impossible to provide an exhaustive account of the ideas that have shaped our current reality, it will prove helpful to briefly consider three intellectual movements and their influence upon the Western church: The Enlightenment, The Industrial Revolution, and the Technical or Second Industrial Revolution.

The Enlightenment

The first of these three movements is the "Enlightenment" or the "Age of Reason." The roots of this movement in the English-speaking world can be traced back to the publication of Isaac Newton's (1642-1726) influential work *Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica* (*The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*) in 1687.[24] Building on the work of Copernicus, Newton revolutionized the contemporary understanding of the world by

[21] Brian Tierney, Donald Kagan and L. Pearce Williams, *Great Issues of Western Civilization*, (USA: McGraw-Hill, 1992), 389.

[22] Carl Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 106.

[23] Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self,* 31.

[24] Some historians place the end of The Enlightenment at the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

systematizing the heliocentric view of our solar system.[25] British historian Brian Tierney argues that the advances made in science led Philosophers such as David Hume and Voltaire to conclude that "if reason could decipher and explain nature, surely it could do the same for political and social problems[26]. Through reason, utopia could be attained. (Thus) the search for simplicity and order in the social and political world was what the Enlightenment was all about."[27] The result was an unparalleled advance in the areas of science, philosophy, individual rights, and political reform.

Religion was not immune to the tides of reason that swept through Europe during the 18th century. British historian David Bebbington believes that the evangelical revival of the 18th century was "permeated by Enlightenment influences."[28] One of these influences was the emphasis on the primacy of human reason. John Locke (1632-1704), who was arguably the most influential Anglophone philosopher of his time, published *The Reasonableness of Christianity, as Delivered in the Scriptures* in 1695. Within the pages of this book, Locke argued that all the truths of Scripture can be accommodated by reason. This assertion, coupled with his deconstruction of the "notion that human knowledge was somehow pre-programmed and mystical,"[29] drove a wedge between knowledge and the experiential.

Evangelicalism's embrace of this emphasis on reason is evidenced in the writings of prominent evangelical leaders of the day. In his paper entitled "Evangelicalism and the Enlightenment," Canadian historian, Michael Haykin, identifies several instances where this

[25] Newton was able to solve the problem of the motions of the heavenly bodies (how the earth moved around the sun) with his three laws of motion and the principle of universal gravitation.

[26] In his essay "That Politics May Be Reduced to a Science," Hume argues that it's the systems and structures of government that make it unpredictable. Once the proper 'checks and balances' are put in place then the problems will disappear.

[27] Tierney, *Great Issues of Western Civilization,* 246.

[28] Michael Haykin, "Evangelicalism, and the Enlightenment*" in The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities* edited by Michael Haykin and Kenneth Stewart (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2008), 39.

[29]Oliver Tearle, "A Summary and Analysis of John Locke's An Essay Concerning Human Understanding", *Interesting Literature*, Accessed March 15, 2023, https:// interestingliterature.com/2023/03/john-locke-essay-concerning-human-understanding-summary-analysis/#

can be seen. The first example provides insight into John Wesley's (1703-1791) commitment to reason. For instance, Wesley informed Thomas Maxfield (d. 1784), an early Methodist preacher, that "(he) dislike(s)…overvaluing *feelings* and inward *impressions*: mistaking the mere work of *imagination* for the voice of the Spirit: expecting the ends without the means, and undervaluing *reason*, *knowledge* and *wisdom* in general."[30] Haykin goes on to point out that,

> …many of Wesley's contemporary evangelicals were imbued with similar convictions. Thomas Gibbons (1720-1785), a Congregational minister, wrote a poem entitled 'A Religious, the only Reasonable Life; or Reason and Religion the Same.' Samuel Walker of Truro (1714-1761), the pioneer of Cornish Evangelicalism, "encouraged young converts to take a course in logic."[31]

The fact that the religious leaders of the 18th century embraced the ideas of the Enlightenment should not come as a surprise; for we are all products of culture to one degree or another. It would have seemed quite logical to deduce that if reason and knowledge can bring about scientific, social, and political advancement, then the same must be true in the spiritual realm.

The emphasis upon reason remains a key issue for the contemporary church. This struggle manifests itself in the PBD church's tendency to define discipleship predominantly in terms of the acquisition of bible knowledge. In order to correct this error, the church must bring balance between knowledge and experience. It is important to note that the word "know" (*ginōskō*) in the New Testament "indicates a relation between the person knowing and the object known; in this respect, what is known is of value or importance to the one who knows, and hence the establishment of the relationship."[32] Biblical "knowing" necessitates intellectual information coupled with relational experience. An awareness of these things will empower the church to revision their philosophy of ministry and the systems and structures

[30] Haykin, *Evangelicalism and the Enlightenment,* 41.

[31] Haykin, *Evangelicalism and the Enlightenment,* 41.

[32] W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2007), 628.

that support it. Without a change in these areas the Western church will struggle to make biblical disciples.

The Industrial Revolution

While The Enlightenment was an attempt to understand and explain nature, the Industrial Revolution sought to harness the power of nature and put it to work through industrial tasks. Several mechanical discoveries (e.g., the spinning-jenny (1765), the water-frame (1775), Crompton's self-spinning mule (1779), and the steam engine (1765))[33] revolutionized the manufacturing industry and brought about significant changes to the way people lived. One of the most dramatic changes was urbanization. As machinery became larger, more expensive, and required power, factories were built to accommodate the machines. The centralization of the workplace around the factory system meant the creation of many new job opportunities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As a result, "many young men left the farm in favor of the high wages, independence, and excitement offered by town life."[34]

The rapidity of the shift from rural to urban living is illustrated by the decline in both the rural population and the percentage of those employed in agriculture in America. In 1800 83% of Americans were employed in agriculture.[35] By 1870 this number had dropped to 50%, and by 1900 it had dropped to 25%.[36] The situation was similar in Great Britain. In 1811 35% of the entire population were engaged in agriculture; in 1871, this number had dropped to a mere 6%.[37] Cultural commentator, David Brooks, views this transition as "the most rapid change in the family structure in human history."[38]

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[33] Tierney, *Great Issues of Western Civilization,* 393.

[34] Steven Ruggles, *Continuity and Change* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 162.

[35] Agriculture, *Digital History*, 2021, Accessed March 29, 2023, www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=11&psid=3837

[36] Agriculture 1950, *United States Census Bureau,* Accessed March 29, 2023, www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/41667073v5p6ch4.pdf, 69.

[37] Tierney, *Great Issues of Western Civilization,* 391-2.

[38] David Brooks, "The Nuclear Family was a Mistake," *The Atlantic* (March 2021): 12.

The inevitable result of urbanization was a shift from the extended to the nuclear family. In an article entitled "The Nuclear Family was a Mistake," David Brooks describes the make-up of an extended family in America,

> Through the early parts of America history, most people lived in what, by today's standards, were big, sprawling households. In 1800, three-quarters of American workers were farmers. Most of the other quarter worked in small family businesses, like dry-goods stores. People needed a lot of labour to run these enterprises. It was not uncommon for married couples to have seven or eight children. In addition, there might be stray aunts, uncles, and cousins, as well as unrelated servants, apprentices, and farmhands.[39]

The extended family consisted of a series of concentric circles, with the husband and wife forming the nucleus of the circle, the children making up the next circle, and the grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, and the like on a further circle.[40] This family structure (the size and its organization around the family business) naturally fostered a community that was interdependent. The elders needed the children to continue to operate the farm, but as long as the elders held the property they were ultimately in control."[41]

Brooks argues that this arrangement was also beneficial because it was like a supportive web of relationships that provided care and support. When someone died, the rest of the family was there to step in. If a relationship between a husband and wife ruptured, members of the family were there to help them work through their issues. If a child needed socializing "multiple adults (would) teach (them) right from wrong, (and) how to behave toward others, (and) how to be kind."[42]

The nuclear family, by contrast, is a smaller detached set of relationships between a married couple and their children. The move from the big, interconnected, extended family, to the small, autonomous, nuclear family, resulted in the "nuclear family fragmenting into

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[39] Brooks, "The Nuclear Family was a Mistake", 5.

[40] Merrill T. Tenney, *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible: Volume 2* (Nashville, TN: Zondervan, 1975), 496-497.

[41] Ruggles, *Continuity and Change,* 149.

[42] Brooks, "The Nuclear Family was a Mistake", 5.

single-parent families, single parent families into chaotic families or no families."[43] The isolation of the nuclear family meant that it lacked the resiliency and socializing force of the extended family. There was no longer a relational cushion to provide support when things went wrong. If a marriage relationship was having trouble "there were no shock absorbers...the end of the marriage means the end of the family as it was previously understood."[44] Children no longer had the benefit of multiple adults speaking into their lives. In short, the centralization of the workplace resulted in the decentralization of the family[45] leaving it fragmented, isolated, and lonely.

The correlation between the shift to the nuclear family and rising divorce rates seem to be more than coincidental. In 1880 the divorce rate was 0.4 for every 1,000 Americans for a total of 20,000 divorces. By 1929 the rate had rose to 1.7 for every 1,000 for a total of 200,000 divorces.[46] The same can be said of the way adult children cared for their aging parents. Stephen Ruggles, Professor of History and Population studies at the University of Minnesota, states that

> in the mid-nineteenth century, about 70 per cent of persons aged 65 or older lived with their children or children in-law. In addition, about a tenth of the elderly lived with other relatives – mainly grandchildren, siblings, nephews, and nieces…only 11 per cent of the elderly in 1850 lived alone or with only their spouses…After 1860, residence with children began to decline…the trend was gradual until 1920, but then began to accelerate…by 1990, less than fifteen per cent of the aged lived with their children.[47]

The lasting consequences of this transition entailed significant isolation, an entrenched individualism, and ultimately, a profound sense of loneliness. A recent study conducted by Cardus (a Christian think tank in Canada) has shown that thirty-three percent of

[43] Brooks, "The Nuclear Family was a Mistake", 3.
[44] Brooks, "The Nuclear Family was a Mistake", 5.
[45] Brooks, "The Nuclear Family was a Mistake", 3.
[46] Frank Olito, "How the Divorce Rate has Changed Over the Last 150 Years", *Business Insider*, January 30, 2019, Accessed April 4, 2023, www.insider.com/divorce-rate-changes-over-time-2019-1#during-the-roaring-20s-the-divorce-rate-climbed-up-to-17-divorces-for-every-1000-americans-52
[47] Ruggles, *Continuity and Change,* 141.

Canadians do not have family or friends they can count on to provide financial assistance in an emergency. The same study revealed that twenty-three percent of the population report being both "very lonely" and "very isolated."[48]

These findings reflect the reality of West Highland Church. Through a Natural Church Development survey, completed in 2018, it was discovered that West Highland's greatest weakness is a Lack of Loving Relationships (See Appendix A). According to NCD, "growing churches possess on average a measurably higher 'love quotient than stagnant or declining (churches)."[49] The "love quotient" (as it is called by NCD) is determined by things such as:

> How much time members spend with one another outside of official church-sponsored events…how generous is the church in doling out compliments? To what extent is the pastor aware of the personal problems of the lay workers in the congregation? How much laughter is there in the church?"[50]

Participants of the survey who belonged to small groups[51] reported that their "relational experiences were strong and were experiencing high degrees of trust and intimacy."[52] Participants of the survey who did not belong to a group were not experiencing intimacy, reconciliation, or a sense of being cared for. They reported that conversations within the church building usually "end at hello," and that it wasn't "easy to break into a large church," or to "form friendships." [53]

If there is a silver lining in this cloud it is that this new reality has left Westerners "groping to build new kinds of family and find better ways to live."[54] Brooks' solution is

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[48] "Loneliness and Social Isolation", *Cardus*, June 29, 2020, Accessed April 6, 2023, www.cardus.ca/research/health/research-brief/loneliness-and-social-isolation, 2.

[49] Christian Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Qualities of Healthy Churches* (St. Charles, IL: 1996), 38.

[50] Schwarz, *Natural Church Development,* 38.

[51] At the time of the survey, only 23% of the total number of people listed in our church directory belonged to a small group. This means that 77% did not and were potentially feeling isolated and lonely.

[52] From Natural Church Development 2018 findings report (Unpublished document) See Appendix B.

[53] From Natural Church Development 2018 findings report (Unpublished document) See Appendix B.

[54] Brooks, "The Nuclear Family was a Mistake", 3.

"forged families" made up of self-selecting individuals instead of blood and marriage kin. The church has an unprecedented opportunity to create these "new kinds of families." Perhaps this was what Jesus was alluding to when He said, "whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Matt 12:50).[55] New families based upon spiritual kinship may be the solution to the current epidemic of isolation and loneliness.

Another impact of the Industrial Revolution was the shift from process to task-oriented thinking. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, people worked on farms and perpetually lived in the context of sowing, cultivating, and harvesting. Factory work removed people from this process and gave them an isolated task to do. Commenting on the detrimental effects of this transition, former MIT professor, and process expert, Michael Hammer writes,

> One of the most profound, albeit unintended, consequences of the Industrial Age was the disconnection of workers from products and the customers who benefited from their work. Anomie is the sociologist's term to describe the rootlessness, alienation, disconnection, and isolation that is endemic to the Industrial Age. The origins of this may be traced to the transition from artisan and peasant to factory worker in the early nineteenth century. On their farms and in their cottages, however wretched the conditions, people saw the outcome and knew the purpose of their labor, and it helped give them a sense of identity. They knew the full cycle of tasks and their own relationship to the result."[57]

By decomposing processes into tasks, the Industrial Revolution did two things. First, it deprived the individual of the satisfaction that comes from a sense of closure and contribution.[58] Those who perform isolated tasks do not reap the benefit of observing how the various tasks fit together to produce an outcome. Those who work in a process feel intimately connected to their work and enjoy a sense of accomplishment that comes from the final result.[59]

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[55] Unless otherwise stated, all biblical quotes are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001).

[57] Michael Hammer, *Beyond Reengineering: How the Process-Centered Organization is Changing our Work and our Lives* (New York, NY: Harper Business, 1996), 49.

[58] Hammer, *Beyond Reengineering,* 49.

[59] Hammer, *Beyond Reengineering,* 49.

The second consequence has to do with perspective. Those who are task-oriented are focused on the task they have been assigned and become inept at recognizing and focusing on the overarching process. This creates significant challenges for organizations where staff have to work as a team to reach the desired outcome. Commenting on the specifics of these challenges, Hammer states that

> Narrow points of view are useless in a process context. It just won't do for each person to be concerned exclusively with his or her own limited responsibility, no matter how well these responsibilities are met. When that occurs, the inevitable result is working at cross-purposes, misunderstandings, and the optimization of the part at the expense of the whole. Process work requires that everyone involved be directed toward a common goal; otherwise, conflicting objectives and parochial agendas impair the effort.[60]

The cumulative effect of the Enlightenment's emphasis on knowledge, and the isolation and task perspective of the Industrial Revolution has resulted in the modern-day church defining discipleship predominantly in terms of the *individual* acquisition of *knowledge* delivered through *isolated programs*. The response of the church must be the creation of authentic community and a shift back to process-centered thinking.

The Technological or "Second Industrial" Revolution

The third movement was the "Technological Revolution," or "Second Industrial Revolution." This was a time marked by rapid scientific discovery, standardization, and mass production from the late 19th century into the early 20th century.[61] Innovations, such as the assembly line, streamlined production and reduced costs making goods more affordable and accessible to the general public.

The abundance of new and inexpensive goods, coupled with aggressive marketing campaigns, resulted in the birth of the consumer culture. Consumerism quickly led to self-indulgence causing one evangelical leader to contend that the 'cancer of consumerism' was

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[60] Hammer, *Beyond Reengineering,* 11.

[61] "The Second Phase of the Industrial Revolution", *Encyclopedia.com,* Accessed April 18, 2023, www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/second-phase-industrial-revolution-1850-1940

responsible for the decay of the church.[62] To illustrate the impact of consumerism, Canadian historian George Rawlyk provides the testimony of a woman who visited a department store near the turn of the twentieth century:

> I felt myself overcome little by little by a disorder that can only be compared to that of drunkenness, with the dizziness and excitation that are peculiar to it. I saw things as if through a cloud, everything stimulated my desire and assumed, for me, an extraordinary attraction. I felt myself swept along toward them and I grabbed hold of things without any outside and superior consideration intervening to hold me back. Moreover I took things at random, useless and worthless articles as well as useful and expensive articles. It was like a monomania of possession.[63]

While this illustration is an extreme example, it does illustrate the intoxicating effect consumerism has had on western society. Common slogans such as "the one with the most toys wins," "time is money," and "the customer is always right" underscore the degree to which this economic philosophy has permeated the western mind-set.

The church is not exempt from this worldview. The prosperity gospel[64] and the seeker-sensitive church are manifestations of Christian consumerism. The seeker-sensitive church tries to make church as comfortable and winsome as possible so that they can get as many unsaved people through the door to hear the gospel. There is nothing inherently wrong about being sensitive to those who are unchurched, but when the focus becomes quantitative over qualitative growth, the "bottom line" mentality of the corporate world has been adopted. Willow Creek, which was a leader of the seeker-sensitive movement, even designed their church building to resemble a shopping mall which is one of the symbols of the consumer society.

Apart from denominations or church movements, we see the consumer mind-set reflected in the way many individuals view the church. Ajith Fernando, teaching director of

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[62] G.A. Rawlyk, *Canadian Baptists and Christian Higher Education* (Kingston, On: McGill-Queens University Press, 1988) 37.

[63] Rawlyk, *Canadian Baptists and Christian Higher Education,* 37.

[64] Prosperity theology teaches that financial blessing and physical well-being are a sign of divine favour.

Youth for Christ, believes that "many view Christianity from the viewpoint of consumers. They choose a church based on what the church has to offer. If the church loses its attractiveness and what they consider its usefulness, they simply change churches."[65] Discipleship author, Bill Hull, agrees with this assessment, stating that:

> It seems that most Christians believe they're consumers. They see their faith and life in the community of their congregation as a way to receive benefits from Christ, a way to get some sort of 'get into heaven' card that salvation provides. This leads to acceptance of non-discipleship Christianity. Just as consumer Christianity rejects the idea that everyone must be a disciple, it also rejects the need for everyone to be a minister."[66]

It's interesting to note that at the turn of the 20th century the consensus within evangelicalism was that the greatest threat to the church were the three external forces of "Darwin and evolution and the new science; … critical biblical scholarship; and … the impact of comparative religion which seemed to undermine, for many, the belief in the uniqueness of Christianity."[67] Without a doubt, "these three forces certainly helped to reshape the contours of North American Protestantism."[68] However, it has been argued that the greater threat was the consumeristic mindset that was subverting the church from within. What is noteworthy is that the evangelical leaders of the day saw the attack on knowledge and reason as the greatest threat and defended the church accordingly. This, of course, is completely in line with their Enlightenment paradigm. While this may have been part of the solution, the lack of attention given to more experiential matters proved costly.

Through the technological revolution, the PBD church has become consumeristic. The church seeks to appeal to the needs of many, and in so doing, does not make disciples of Jesus Christ. In the words of Hull, "The church has become expert at producing consumer Christians who are nice people, but who are not formed into the life of Christ."[69] The

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[65] Ajith Fernanda, *Discipling in a Multicultural World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 30.
[66] Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006) 172.
[67] Rawlyk, *Canadian Baptists and Christian Higher Education,* 36.
[68] Rawlyk, *Canadian Baptists and Christian Higher Education,* 36.
[69] Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship,* 253.

cumulative effect of these three movements has been the creation of Christians who are *individualistic consumers* of religious *knowledge* through *isolated programs*.

The Effects of the Program Based Design

Understanding the revolution of thought that took place in the period 1789-1914 makes the emergence and cultural dominance of the PBD comprehensible.[70] With this understanding we can look at the specific manifestations of the PBD paradigm within specific ministry contexts and understand how we got to this place. This understanding will provide insight into what needs to be done to bring about the change that is needed to make healthy disciples.

Programs

A program is any ministry of the church that brings people together for the purpose of disciple making. When disciple making is defined in terms of providing believers with Bible knowledge, then the most pragmatic way to accomplish this goal is to gather people together in programs where knowledge is dispensed.

Even though these programs may host a number of people simultaneously, they are predominantly i*ndividualistic* in nature. The programs are usually structured so that those in attendance "sit in rows facing forward like mindless automatons and miss out on connecting with others and the spiritual growth that results from being in community."[71] This is what Ed Stetzer refers to as disconnected people sitting in rows instead of connected people sitting in circles.[72]

Not only are the programs individualistic, but they are also disconnected from an overarching process of spiritual growth. Program managers focus on their part without reference to the whole, resulting in ministry silos.

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[70] Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self,* 106.

[71] Ed Stetzer and Eric Geiger, *Transformational Groups* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 35.

[72] Stetzer and Geiger, *Transformational Groups,* 179.

The consumeristic mindset also drives the PBD church to offer as many programs as possible to meet the needs of the "religious consumer." At one point, West Highland Church offered forty-two different programs. Rather than thinking that this was too many, some think that it's a good thing, representing a smorgasbord of ministry. The smorgasbord, like the shopping mall, is a powerful symbol of consumption in Western culture where there is something for everyone and the quantities are unlimited.

In the PCD, programs are seen as a collective that produces an outcome. Each program is subservient to the overarching process, and each seeks to promote the next step in spiritual transformation

Success

The PBD measures success quantitatively rather than qualitatively. The primary gauge for church health is what Hull refers to as "the holy trinity of Bodies, Bucks, and Buildings."[73] How many programs, how many people, and how much money become the "yardstick" for church health. Without a process in place, the PBD church defaults to measuring "performance data on tasks and departments, but not on processes, which (should be) at the very heart of the entire enterprise."[74] The problem with this approach, says Michael Hammer, is that it doesn't "watch to see if all the tasks (or programs) together produce the results they're supposed to." In the end it is possible to grow numerically and be unhealthy, for as church consultant Kevin Ford correctly observes, "Healthy churches are usually growing churches, but growing churches are not always healthy churches."[75]

Some at West Highland, when considering a drop of 293 people in the directory between May of 2021 and March of 2023, were unconcerned because during the same period, offerings were up. This response demonstrates the reality that church leadership have been

[73] As quoted in Putman, *Discipleshift,* 202

[74] Hammer, *Beyond Reengineering,* 11.

[75] Kevin Ford, *Transforming Church* (USA: Tyndale Publishers, 2007), 8.

provided with a partial scorecard where the only measurements are "bodies, bucks, and buildings." When attendance is faltering, the only recourse they have to off-set a negative attendance result is to look to the other two scorecards in their repertoire. In this case, the strength of the church's financial situation was used to compensate for the decline in attendance. While it is not wrong to measure bodies, bucks, and buildings, the most important measurement is whether or not disciples are being made. Success in the PCD is based on whether disciples are being made. Overall engagement in the process becomes the primary gauge of church health.

Organizational Structure

The structure of the church is how it organizes itself to govern its processes. Structures are supportive while processes are functional. Since structures are usually subservient to the process, it should not come as a surprise that the PBD church creates an organizational structure to support the creation and maintenance of knowledge-based programs.

The structure of the PCD is built around a "straightforward and strategic process that moves people through the stages of spiritual growth."[76] It seeks to bring clarity, movement, alignment, and focus.[77]

Staff

In the PBD church, staff are seen as professionals who are hired to manage the various knowledge-based programs of the church. The first thing that a PBD church looks for, says Ralph Neighbour, are,

> specialists to direct the different programs of the church…who can come and preach, teach, counsel, raise the budget, administer its spending, win the lost, and effectively manage the church schedule. He is not particularly seen as an 'equipper of the saints

[76] Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 67.
[77] Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church*, 68.

> for the work of ministry;' instead, he is The Minister. He does the things that professional clergymen do.[78]

Many seminarians graduate with a passion to make a significant contribution in the lives of people. However, Ajith Fernanda (former National Director for Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka) points out that in the Program Based environment the focus is on increasing the "attendance, events, programs, and buildings. These visible goals can take so much time that there is no time left to give concentrated attention to personal discipling."[79] The unfortunate result is that many pastors who entered ministry because they had a passion to see people transformed into the image of Christ, end up becoming program managers.

In the PCD, staff are expected to "equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph 4:12). Leaders empower members of their congregation for ministry by "invert(ing) the pyramid of authority so that the leaders assist Christians to attain the spiritual potential God has for them. These pastors equip, support, motivate, and mentor individuals, enabling them to become all that God wants them to be."[80]

Serving

In a PBD church many volunteers are needed to keep the programs of the church running. This need drives leaders to "dictate which ministries lay-persons should assume and then search eagerly for 'volunteers' to fulfill their vision. Should they not find any volunteers, they apply pressure."[81] Through this approach, leaders inadvertently "use lay workers as "helpers" in attaining their own goals and fulfilling their own visions."[82] The irony of the non-gift-oriented approach is that when people serve in an area that does not align with their gifts they "generally operate in their own strength instead of in the strength of

[78] Neighbour, *Where Do We Go From Here?,* 66.
[79] Fernanda, *Discipling in a Multi Cultural World,* 42.
[80] Schwartz, *Natural Church Development,* 24.
[81] Schwartz, *Natural Church Development,* 27.
[82] Schwartz, *Natural Church Development,* 24.

the Holy Spirit."[83] The result is less proficiency in the area of service, a diminished sense of contentedness and joy, and eventual ministry fatigue. In fact, "surveys of heavily involved church workers in Program Based Design structures show they burn out after two or three years (and many) no longer regularly attend church."[84]

The PCD sees service as a transformative opportunity for the individual. As such, the "role of church leadership is to help its members identify their gifts and to integrate them into appropriate ministries."[85] This approach looks to the value of the person and what is going to help them become more Christ-like instead of what will build and maintain programs.

Small Groups

In the PBD, small groups are seen as one program among many instead of an indispensable part of an overarching transformative process. In the case of West Highland this was evidenced in the fact that in 2018 the small group ministry at West Highland consisted of 27 small groups with roughly 315 people in regular attendance. This represented 39% of the average Sunday attendance and only 23% of the total number of people listed in the church directory. These numbers were also representative of the leadership with only 3 of 9 elders and 2 of 9 staff members in a small group. A church cannot claim that small groups have a place of prominence if only 27% of the leadership attends a group.

In the PCD model, groups are seen as the primary place for community to happen. Commenting on the importance of groups, Ed Stetzer states that "because community involves a supernatural God component, it becomes a non-negotiable in our local churches. We need to stop presenting community as just another option for the religious consumer and start presenting it as God's will for everyone."[86] In the PCD model, small groups are the primary vehicle for community, transformation, and mission. Groups are the place where

[83] Schwartz, *Natural Church Development,* 26.
[84] Neighbour, *Where Do We Go From Here?,* 67.
[85] Schwartz, *Natural Church Development,* 26.
[86] Stetzer, *Transformational Groups,* 16.

significant community is built, where people can utilize their gifts, and where the community is on mission together.

Evangelism

In PBD churches, evangelism happens primarily through impersonal programs put on by the church. A Barna study found that:

> Just 10 percent of Christians in 1993 who had shared about their faith agreed with the statement "converting people to Christianity is the job of the local church"—as opposed to the job of an individual (i.e., themselves). Twenty-five years later, three in 10 Christians who have had a conversation about faith say evangelism is the local church's responsibility (29%), a nearly threefold increase.[87]

Most of the evangelism that happens is not taking place organically through the relational networks of Christians.

> In the PCD evangelism is seen as a process that happens in the context of relationship and community. Christians should be intentionally entering into relationship with those who are without Christ in the world. Mission is seen as part of the transformation process and a fruit of spiritual maturity. Ralph Neighbour goes so far as to say that "no true discipleship or spiritual growth will occur among Christians who are not involved in ministry to a broken world."[88]

Conclusion

The three movements of the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and the Technological Revolution form the intellectual foundation of modern culture and the PBD church. Churches that adopt this model for disciple making, and West Highland is one of those churches, create partial disciples who never grow past spiritual young adulthood.

Western cultures have been programmed to think as individualistic consumers of knowledge. By understanding how we got here, we are able to "de-program" our minds so that we can build churches that make disciples. In order to do this, PBD churches will need to do several things. First, the church needs to bring balance to knowledge and experience.

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[87] "Sharing Faith is Increasingly Optional to Christians", *Barna,* May 15, 2018, Accessed April 30, 2023, www.barna.com/research/sharing-faith-increasingly-optional-christians/

[88] Neighbour, *Where Do We Go From Here?,* 277.

There needs to be teaching, application, accountability, and affirmation so that people move from knowledge to obedience. Second, the PBD church needs to intentionally build authentic community through small groups. These will serve as the primary spaces for community, transformation, and mission. The third change that needs to happen in the PBD church is a shift from task to process thinking. "The industrial revolution decomposed processes into tasks; process centering puts them back together."[89]By putting them back together we can strategically move people through a process of transformation.

Finally, the PBD church needs to intentionally move their people away from a consumeristic mindset. This can be done through teaching, modelling, and simplifying. Instead of offering a smorgasbord of programs, the church needs to identify the primary ministries. "Primary ministries are the ones that are most important in helping your congregation embrace the characteristics of discipleship and become mature."[90] These are the ministries that everyone should be involved in. Less is more in the PCD because it provides time and space for people to focus on what really matters, instead of being distracted by endless opportunities that by themselves do not lead to transformation.

[89] Hammer, *Beyond Reengineering,* 49.
[90] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning,* 200.

CHAPTER TWO: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theological rationale for the transition from a PBD to PCD model for disciple making. In this section we will explore the theological underpinnings of a PCD by explaining key concepts such as community, process, relational environments, and by defining the basic terms of discussion.

Created for Community

The risen Christ has called the church to world evangelization and discipleship. The question that arises from this mandate is what strategy should be used to accomplish this task? Do the Scriptures provide us with a model or are we given the freedom to apply the approach of our own choosing? As we consider the redemptive narrative of Scripture, a significant theme that emerges is that of community. If community plays such a vital role in God's redemptive plan, in what way should it inform the nature of discipleship?

Part of the answer to this question is found in identifying the biblical basis for discipleship. As is the case in any area of theology, the starting point is God. As missiologist Timothy Tennent correctly observes, *"*Mission is first and foremost about God and His redemptive purposes and initiatives in the world, quite apart from any actions or tasks or strategies or initiatives the church may undertake. To put it plainly, mission is far more about God and who He is than about us and what we do."[1] Not only is this so since God is the originator and sustainer of all things, which necessitates that all things find their meaning and purpose in Him, but also because our motives and methods in mission should align with His nature since we are image bearers of the divine.

[1] Timothy Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2010), 55.

So, what is it about God's nature that connects the dots between discipleship and community? While many of His attributes are relevant to this question, it is His triune nature that provides a proper understanding of these things. The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that God is one being who exists eternally in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The tri-personal existence of God means, as Timothy Keller states, "that God is, in essence, relational."[2] In other words, God has always existed as an eternal loving community within Himself. Jesus' words in John 17 shed some light on the dynamics of this community.

> Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed (John 17:1-5). [3]

From this portion of Jesus' High-Priestly prayer, we deduce that the relationship within the Trinity is the impetus for mission. As Leon Morris states, "the giving of eternal life to people is the outworking of the glory of which Jesus speaks."[4] So what does it mean that the persons of the Trinity glorify one another? And what are the implications of this for the Church? Again, we turn to Timothy Keller, who skillfully explains the meaning of glorify in this text:

> To glorify something or someone is to praise, enjoy, and delight in them. When something is useful you are attracted to it for what it can bring you or do for you. But if it is beautiful, then you enjoy it simply for what it is. Just being in its presence is its own reward. To glorify someone is also to defer to him or her. Instead of sacrificing their interests to make yourself happy, you sacrifice your interests to make them happy. Why? Your ultimate joy is to see them in joy. What does it mean, then, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit glorify one another? If we think graphically, we could say that self-centeredness is to be stationary, static. In self-centeredness we demand that others orbit around us. We will do things and give affection to others, as long as it helps us meet our personal goals and fulfills us. The inner life of the triune God, however, is utterly different. The life of the Trinity is characterized not by self-centeredness but by mutually self-giving love. When we delight and serve someone

[2] Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Scepticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 223.

[3] Unless otherwise stated, all biblical quotes are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001).

[4] Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 636.

> else, we enter into a dynamic orbit around him or her, we center on the interests and desires of the other. That creates a dance, particularly if there are three persons, each of whom moves around the other two. So it is, the Bible tells us. Each of the divine persons centers upon the others. None demands that the other two revolve around him. Each voluntarily circles the other two, pouring love, delight, and adoration into them."[5]

If the fundamental nature of the Trinity is a community of mutual self-giving love, then it follows that as image-bearers we too have been created to experience this type of community as the center of our reality. The implications of this truth for the church's mission are significant. Howard Snyder contends that this means that the "church is, and is called to be, a Trinitarian community."[6] This statement is broadly supported in Scripture, but we find its clearest affirmation once again in Jesus' High-Priestly prayer.

> I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given to me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. (John 17:20-23)

Commenting on this passage, Snyder goes on to say that the church is the "I in them and you in me community, the community of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit".[7] Through the Holy Spirit, God indwells the church so that she can reflect the Trinitarian nature of God in two fundamental ways. First, as has already been stated, the church should be a community that is bound together by mutual love and self-giving interdependence. What differentiates this community from any other is that it is rooted in a vibrant relationship with God through Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. The death of Jesus has removed the penalty of sin and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit has broken the power of sin for those who are disciples

[5] Keller, *The Reason for God*, 224.

[6] Howard A. Snyder, *The Missional Church and Missional Life (*Toronto, ON: Tyndale University College and Seminary, 2007), 6.

[7] Snyder, *The Missional Church and Missional Life*, 6.

of Jesus. This can be said of no other community on earth! The second implication flows out of the first, for, as Ralph Neighbour notes, "An essential characteristic of love is its desire to enlarge community."[8] By definition, love looks outward. It desires to expand its community so that others can enjoy and experience what it has.

The value that God places on community is evident throughout the biblical narrative, from Genesis to Revelation. This is illustrated in the very act of creation itself. God didn't create humanity because He was lonely and in need of companionship. Nor was it vanity that compelled Him to create subjects that would worship Him. On the contrary, the desire to create stems from the very being of a loving God who wanted us to share in the infinite joy of knowing Him! But not only did God create us for communion with Himself, but He also designed us to be in community with others. After Adam was created, God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone", hence a suitable companion was created for him (Gen 2:18). In the garden, Adam and Eve experienced perfect community. The ability to create was bestowed upon Adam and Eve, who through an act of intimate love, could bring forth new life and create the foundational community of society—the family.

Community Destroyed

The centrality of community in God's design for humanity is underscored by the fact that it was part of the focus of Satan's attack in the garden. The temptation to eat from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" represented "the temptation to be autonomous (from the Greek words *autos*, "self" and *nomos*, "law")."[9] This desire to be autonomous is the antithesis of community. God warned Adam and Eve that autonomy would lead to death. In

[8] Ralph Neighbour, *Where Do We Go From Here: A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church* (Houston, TX: Touch Publications, 2000), 116.

[9] Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 42.

his commentary on Genesis, Gordon Wenham makes an important connection between death and the destruction of community.

> In Israelite worship, true life was experienced when one went to the sanctuary. There God was present. There he gave life. But to be expelled from the camp, as lepers were, was to enter the realm of death. Those unfortunates had to behave like mourners, with their clothes torn and their hair disheveled (Lev 13:45). If to be expelled from the camp of Israel was to "die," expulsion from the garden was an even more drastic kind of death. In this sense they did die on the day they ate of the tree; they were no longer able to have daily conversations with God, enjoy his bounteous provision, and eat of the tree of life; instead they had to toil for food, suffer, and eventually return to the dust from which they were taken.[10]

In the mind of an Israelite, to live in isolation was tantamount to death. Thus, destruction of community was a significant consequence of the fall. Instead of being bound together by mutual love and self-giving interdependence, Adam and Eve become self-centered and hide from one another, using fig leaves, and from God, among the trees of the garden (Gen 3:8).

Community Restored

After the fall, the effects of sin began to manifest themselves in the murder of Abel, in Lamech's polygamy and his use of poetry to threaten violence and revenge on any potential adversary, and finally came to a climax in the defiance and arrogance of man's building a tower to reach God's dwelling and make a name for himself. God's response to man's rebellion is summarized well by a confessional statement from the Christian Reformed Church: "While justly angry, God did not turn away from a world bent on destruction but turned to face it in love. With patience and tender care the Lord set out on the long road of redemption to reclaim the lost as his people and the world as his kingdom."[11] The long road of redemption of which this passage speaks is a process that involves several stages. Wayne

[10] Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 74.

[11] 18. Redemption, Our World Belongs to God, *Christian Reformed Church*, Accessed October 18, 2023, www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/contemporary-testimony/our-world-belongs-god

Grudem outlines the different stages that are involved in the process of making a disciple of Jesus Christ:

1) *The gospel call***:** This is where God addresses us personally through the preaching of the gospel.
2) *Regeneration***:** God imparts new life to us by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
3) *Justification***:** God gives us legal standing before him based upon the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.
4) *Adoption***:** God makes us members of his family.
5) *Sanctification***:** A progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.[12]

There are two things from Grudem's outline that are relevant to a discussion on discipleship. The first is that sanctification is a progressive work that is never completed in this life. Progressive and process have the same meaning, as both refer to something that is not yet complete.

The second point is that this is a work of both God and man. God has chosen to invite the church into a partnership with Himself. As the church, we have the privilege of participating in the "gospel call" and "sanctification." Regeneration, justification, and adoption are purely works of God that happen independently of human agency. The gospel call and sanctification together comprise discipleship. While it is helpful to distinguish between evangelism (seeking to create a new believer) and discipleship (seeking to help a disciple grow), in some circles they have become separated to the point that there is no longer a connection between them. The danger for Christians is that they only help other believers to grow and never engage in evangelism.

While this distinction is helpful, in reality, both belong under the umbrella of making disciples. This is evidenced by the fact that when Jesus commissioned the disciples to "make disciples of all nations," the number of disciples was fairly small and limited to a confined geographical area. In light of this, the command to make disciples must presuppose that

[12] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 746.

evangelism is the first step of the disciple making process. The gospel call (evangelism) is the front end of the discipleship process, while teaching them to obey everything that Jesus has commanded is the sanctification part of the process.

The purpose of discipleship is thus to participate with God in the rebuilding of His image in fallen humanity so that the Trinitarian type of community described earlier in this chapter can be restored. Such a vision reflects Jesus' request in the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:9(b)–10). It is by making disciples that men and women come to delight in God (glorify God) and progressively obey his will.

The Process of Restoration

The rebuilding of the image of God in a person requires a process of transformation. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a process is "a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end."[13] Michael Hammer defines it as "a related group of tasks that together create a result."[14] From a discipleship perspective, a process would be a related series of steps or actions that are taken in order to become more like Jesus Christ.

Jesus' Teaching on Process

There is an abundance of teaching about the process of discipleship throughout the New Testament. In his book, *The Concept of Disciple in Matthew's Gospel*, Michael Wilkins makes a convincing argument that the Gospel of Matthew is arranged in such a way as to be "at least in part a manual on discipleship."[15] Within the pages of this "manual," Matthew paints a picture of "disciples who display a normal process of growth." [16] It is through these

[13] Process, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2023, www.oed.com

[14] Michael Hammer, *Beyond Reengineering: How the Process-Centered Organization is Changing our Work and our Lives* (New York, NY: Harper Business, 1996), 5.

[15] Michael J. Wilkins, *The Concept of Disciple in Matthew's Gospel* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 221.

[16] Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 175.

depictions, argues Wilkins, that future generations are taught about discipleship and equipped to go and make disciples.[17]

In the gospels Jesus teaches specifically about discipleship as a process. In Mark 4:1–34, we find three parables that relate to growth: the sower (see verses 3–8), the growing seed (see verses 26–29), and the mustard seed (see verses 30–32). Each parable reflects on sowing, growth, and harvest elements that illustrate the character of the coming Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus.[18] These parables clearly compare the process of growth in nature to the process of disciple making.

> The Great Commission also provides teaching on the process of growth as a disciple.[19] As Jesus prepares to leave the disciples, he commands them to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."(Mt. 28:19–20) Wilkins contends that the process of discipleship is implied in these verses: a person responds to the invitation to come out of the nations to start life as a disciple, she or he begins the life of discipleship through baptism and through obedience to Jesus' teaching. "Baptizing" describes the activity by which the new disciple identifies with Jesus, and "teaching" introduces the activities by which the new disciple grows in discipleship. We should note that the process of growth does not include only instruction. Growth in discipleship is accomplished as the new disciple is obedient to what Jesus commanded.[20]

Another example of Jesus' teaching on the process of discipleship is found in John 15. In this chapter Jesus likens the tending of a vineyard to discipleship. Jesus is pictured as the vine and His disciples are the branches. If the branch remains connected to the vine it will grow. However, "left to itself a vine will produce a good deal of unproductive growth. For maximum fruitfulness extensive pruning is essential."[21] In this metaphor we encounter a process of grafting, cultivating, pruning, fruit bearing, and harvesting. Being a disciple is quite similar to the process of maintaining a vineyard.

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[17] Wilkins, *The Concept of Disciple in Matthew's Gospel*, 222

[18] William L. Lane, *the Gospel of Mark*, the New International Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 149.

[19] Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 189.

[20] Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 189-190.

[21] Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 594.

Other New Testament Teaching on Process

Another analogy that is used to describe discipleship is that of human development. In his letter to the exiles of the dispersion, the Apostle Peter exhorts his readers to be like newborn babies who "crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation" (1 Pet 2:2). The milk, which is the Word of God, is presented as the nourishment that one takes into one's body in order to *grow up* into salvation. Here, maturation as a disciple is pictured as analogous to the process of a growing body.

The concept of growing up is used elsewhere in the New Testament. In some instances the reference is to physical growth (Luke 1:80, 2:40), while in other instances it is speaking of spiritual growth (Eph 4:15; Col 1:10; 2 Pet 3:18).[22] The fact that the same language is used interchangeably with regard to physical and spiritual growth underscores the fact that the New Testament writers see the process of physical growth and spiritual growth as analogous.

Using the same metaphor of milk, the writer of Hebrews scolds his readers for their stinted spiritual growth:

> …though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil (Heb 5:12–14).

The clear implication is that "for the believer to advance no further than an initial commitment to Christ will in the end result in a spiritual monstrosity, just as it does on the physical level in the case of an infant who fails to develop in body."[23] Just as physical growth (which is a process) is seen as a sign of physical health, so too is spiritual growth a sign of spiritual health.

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[22] Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, (Nottingham, England: Inter Varsity Press, 1988), 101.

[23] Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, New International Biblical Commentary, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 57.

In First Corinthians 3 Paul uses three metaphors that illustrate that spiritual transformation is a process. In this passage Paul refers to believers as God's children (verse 1), God's field (verse 9), and God's building (verse 9).[24] We are born again as God's children, but the transition from spiritual childhood to adulthood is a process. In farming, there is a clear process of cultivating, sowing, and harvesting. They are sequential. In the same way that it would be foolishness to expect a harvest without cultivating and sowing, so it is foolish to expect to make mature disciples without an intentional process to accomplish the desired end.

The word for building comes from the Greek word *oikodomē*. There is some ambiguity to this word as it can refer "either to the finished product or to the process"[25] of construction. The meaning has to be determined by the context. In the verses that follow (verses 10–15) "the emphasis lies on the process of 'building' the building (the verb *epoixodomeō* is repeated four times).[26]

The implication for the church is that making disciples requires a process. In the same way that a builder needs a blueprint, the church needs spiritual blueprints that tell her what is to be built and how to build it. The seriousness of this task is underscored by Paul's warning to "build with care" (1 Cor 3:10), because the quality of their work will be tested with fire (I Cor 13-15).

Paul uses the building metaphor again in Colossians 2:7 to encourage believers to remain steadfast in their faith. The word "built up" (*epoikodomoumenoi*) is used in the "present tense, which describes continuous action. The building up of their life in Christ … (is an) ongoing process."[27] The work of building is never finished on this side of the eternal

[24] Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 59.

[25] Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians the* New International Commentary of the New Testament, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 137.

[26] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 137.

[27] Arthur Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, New International Biblical Commentary, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1990), 49.

state. We will always need to refine and deepen our faith and character. Its only when we step into eternity that God will perfect our "building."

Jesus and the New Testament authors used imagery from agriculture, building, and human development to illustrate the process of becoming a disciple. It only makes sense that Jesus would use metaphors from everyday life to paint a picture of what discipleship looked like. On their farms people knew the agricultural process of tilling, sowing, cultivating, harvesting, and storing. People would also see buildings being constructed in their towns and in their neighborhoods. And, of course, everybody sees and experiences the stages of human development.

The Environments within the Process

The process of discipleship happens within the context of community, because as pastor and author Jim Putman asserts, disciples are made in the context of relational environments.[28] Leadership guru Daniel Goleman affirms this, stating that "leadership development can only occur in the tumult and possibilities of our relationships."[29] The reason for this, continues Goleman, is that "others help us see things we are missing, affirm whatever progress we have made, test our perceptions…they provide the context for experimentation and practice."[30] It is only in the context of relationship that the truths of Scripture can be tested, experienced, and worked out in day to day relationships.

The question then becomes what are the relational environments where this change takes place? In his book *The Search to Belong*, Joseph Myers shares the theory of Proxemics, which explores the "relationship between space, culture, community, and belonging. In this theory … there are four spaces humans connect differently in: the public (50+ people), the

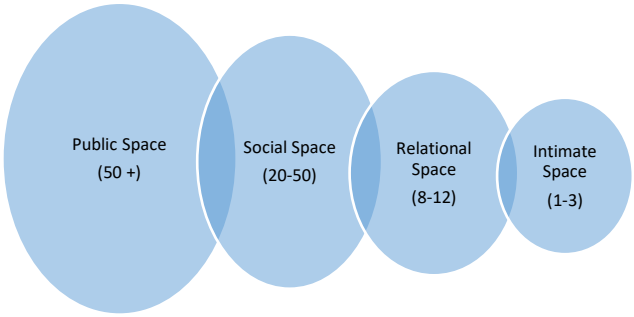
[28] Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington, *Discipleshift*: *Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan, 2013), 30.

[29] Daniel Goleman, *Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional* Intelligence (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2013), 111.

[30] Goleman, *Primal Leadership*, 111.

social (20–50 people), the personal (8–12 people), and the intimate (1–3 people)."[31] (See Figure 4)

Figure 4: Four Spaces of Human Connection



Obviously, there is a degree of subjectivity in the numerical ranges given in each space (the fact that there is no designated space for groups ranging between 13–19 people underscores this point!). Nevertheless, the fact that multiple relational environments exist and that each of these spaces create unique relational dynamics is undeniable.

All four of these spaces originate by God's design, are rooted in Scripture, and are used by God to carry his strategy of salvation to the world. Within these spaces God has provided ongoing structures for the public and relational space in the form of public worship gatherings and the family. The structures are necessary, for as Wilkins points out, "a 'community' necessarily manifests two essential ingredients: relations (of mutual acceptance, forgiveness, and service) and structured organization (with clear boundaries of demarcation of function)."[32] These structures provide continuing environments for people to inhabit within a process that "move(s) people from little or no commitment to deeper levels of commitment and maturity."[33] We do not need to invent these forms ourselves, for God has already provided structures to fulfill his purposes.

William Beckham uses the two wings of a bird to illustrate these forms:

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[31] As quoted in Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016), 87.
[32] Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 270.
[33] Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI:, Zondervan, 1995), 129.

> The Creator once created a church with two wings: one wing was for large group celebration, the other wing was for small group community. Using both wings, the church could soar high into the heavens, entering into His presence and doing His will all over the earth.[34]

While this illustration refers to the New Testament church, the same "two wings" are present throughout Scripture and were designed to complement one another. Commenting on the synergy of these two structures, Snyder states,

> Believers need those times of solemn corporate worship in which the High and Holy God is honored with dignity and reverence. But in the midst of the dignity and reverence many a lonely believer inwardly cries out for the warm, healing touch of koininia. Believers need to know by experience that the Most High God is also the Most Nigh God (Is. 57:15). If traditional corporate worship is not regularly supplemented with informal opportunities for koininia, believers easily drift into a practical deism while the church becomes the sacred guardian of a powerless form of godliness. On the other hand, form and liturgy take on a new meaning for Christians who are living and growing in koinonia.[35]

When these two structures are functioning properly, symbiosis occurs. In the large group setting God supernaturally uses prayer, the preaching of the Word, and corporate worship to transform hearts and affections. In the small group setting, God supernaturally uses community to mature his people and to reach the lost. [36] Both of these gatherings are important to God, and both are necessary for discipleship to be effective.

By first looking at the biblical examples of the large and small gathering in the Old and New Testament we can better understand the current malaise of the Western church and its failure to fully implement the strategy and structure that has been modelled throughout Scripture. This will help us determine how the church in the West can re-align itself with this model.

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[34] William A. Beckham, *The Second Reformation: Reshaping the Church for the 21st Century* (Houston, TX: Touch Publications, 1995), 25–26.

[35] Howard Snyder, as cited in William A. Beckham, *The Second Reformation: Reshaping the Church for the 21st Century*, 85.

[36] Ed Stetzer, *Transformational Groups* (Nashville: B & H Publishing House, 2014), 65.

The Large Group Celebration and Discipleship in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament the subject of the large gathering is introduced in Leviticus 23:1–2, "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: The feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be Holy Convocations, these are my feasts." In the remainder of the chapter, God lists eight gatherings which are called "appointed feasts" (*moed*). The etymology of this word originates from a verb meaning "to appoint or fix (2 Sam 20:5), and "the noun most commonly occurs in the phrase 'tent of meeting.'"[37] These feasts are described as "Holy Convocations." This phrase occurs 11 times throughout Leviticus 23, six times in Numbers 28-29, and twice in Exodus 12:16. The word convocation (*miqra*) "literally means a 'call,' 'summons,' or 'reading."[38] In Numbers, the word is used when God instructs Moses to make two silver trumpets that are to be blown *to call* the congregation of Israel together. In Isaiah 1:13 and 4:5 the word is used in the context of Israel *calling* assemblies to worship God. "Putting these scraps of information together," says Wenham, "we may suggest that 'a holy convention' was a national gathering for public worship." [39]

The first of the appointed feasts that is described is the weekly Sabbath. Keil suggests that this is the case because the "sabbatical principle informs all the Pentateuchal laws about festivals."[40] The fact that there are seven additional festivals that all require seven days of rest, lend credence to this position. What is most relevant to the topic at hand is the designation of the Sabbath as an appointed feast. This implies that it was designed to be a weekly national gathering of public worship. That the Israelites understood it this way is evident in the period following the destruction of the first Temple and the Babylonian exile

[37] Gordon J. Wenham, *Leviticus,* The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1979), 301.

[38] Wenham, *Leviticus*, 301.

[39] Wenham, *Leviticus*, 301.

[40] Wenham, *Leviticus*, 301.

when synagogues became ubiquitous, not only in the place of exile, but in Israel upon their return. Even the Greek word for synagogue, which literally means "assembly," was used in place of the Hebrew word meaning 'congregation' or 'community of Israel,' and has striking similarities to the language used of the feasts in Leviticus 23.

What was the purpose of this weekly gathering of public worship? R.K. Harrison points out that "the description of these gatherings as feasts indicates their joyful character, and shows that not all the gatherings within the sanctuary precincts were necessarily solemn or filled with foreboding."[41] The Sabbath, which was sanctified by the Lord at creation (Gen 2:1–3), but not observed until the time of the Exodus (Exod 16:23), was a weekly celebration commemorating the Lord's rest at creation and the deliverance from servitude to Egypt (Deut 5:12–15).[42] These gatherings would have included offerings and sacrifices, worship and praise, and the reading and exposition of Scripture (Deut 31:10ff; Neh 8-9). In short, the weekly Sabbath gathering was a celebration of who God is, what He has done, and what He continues to do in and through the community.

Embedded in Israel's identification and gathering as God's people, we see again His design for reaching the nations. In the Old Testament, the people of God were meant to be a light to the nations. They were primarily a stationary people who through their relationship with God attracted the attention of the surrounding nations. The geographic location of Israel was strategically chosen by God for this purpose. Israel was located at the crossroads between two great empires. These empires depended upon one another for international trade, and the trade route, known as the Via Maris, or the Way of the Sea, ran directly through

[41] R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 215.

[42] Merrill C. Tenney, *the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible: Volume 5* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 521.

Israel.[43] Craig Bartholomew provides important insight into the relationship between Israel's call and their strategic geographic location.

> Israel is to be 'a display people, showcase to the world of how being in covenant with Yahweh changes a people.' As the Israelites obey God, they will demonstrate what life under God's reign looks like. The nations will be able to catch a glimpse of God's plan for all people. The whole of Israel's experience, including family life, law, politics, economics, and recreation, will reflect God's character and God's original creational intention for human life. Israel's life under God is to testify to the living presence of God within God's people. It is to be such a full and rich human life that the nations of the earth will be drawn to it. In this way Israel will fulfill the Abrahamic covenant to bless all nations.[44]

Israel was to live in such a way that they were to be like a magnet that would draw people from other nations to God. As the nations were drawn to investigate the God of Israel, the people of God were meant to love and serve others. God commanded Israel to share the news of salvation in tangible ways, by providing for the poor (Lev 23:22) and for the foreigner (Exod 12:48-49), but also through their inclusion into the religious community. Foreigners in the land were to be gathered with the Israelites to listen and learn to fear the law (Deut 31:12), and the Temple was to be a house of prayer for all nations (Isa 56:7).

The Small Group Community and Discipleship in the Old Testament

Although the word 'disciple' is only used three times in the Old Testament (1 Chr 25:8; Isa 8:16; 50:4), it was a prominent feature of family life in Judaism. The word is derived from the "verbs meaning 'to learn,' and denoted the learning process (of) adopting the philosophy, practices and way of life of his teacher."[45] The centrality of the family to covenant life made it the natural context for discipleship. Michael Wilkins asserts that in both

[43] Fred Warner, "Why was the Location of Israel Strategic in Ancient Times?", *History Disclosure,* June 23, 2023, Accessed March 17, 2024, https:// historydisclosure.com/why-was-the-location-of-israel-strategic-in-ancient-times/

[44] Bartholomew and Goheen, T*he Drama of Scripture,* 66.

[45] Merrill C. Tenney, *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible: Volume 2* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 129–130.

the Old and New Testaments "the earthly family plays a major role in God's program for humankind … the family was the means through which succeeding generations of individuals were assured of being raised to know the will of God and the importance of community life."[46] Bob Hopkins agrees with this saying,

> There was a strong Jewish tradition of the extended family expressing all aspects of the life of the people of God. Worship and learning the faith story were central to the daily, weekly and annual rhythms of family life. Traditions and rituals such as the shared cup, Sabbath readings and yearly celebrations nurtured and sustained them.[47]

These rhythms of family life were designed to be effective in spiritual formation because "value systems are created in the context of living, not studying."[48] The small group setting provided the opportunity for the truths learned in the large meeting to be tested, experienced, and worked out in day-to-day relationships. We get a picture of God's intention for discipleship within the family from His instructions surrounding the Shema:

> Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your hearts. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deut 6:4-9).

The learning, or discipleship, that took place in the family happened in the ebb and flow of the daily rhythms of life. It took place as the family sat around the dinner table, while they were working on their farm, or as they lay on their beds and drifted off to sleep.

The extended family was also a natural place for evangelism to occur. First, the children would be evangelized, but the family, which could number twenty or thirty people, would have an extensive network of relationships through which the good news of salvation

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[46] Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 139.
[47] Michael Green, *Church without Walls* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002), 41.
[48] Neighbour, *Where Do We Go From Here?*, 120.

could be shared and lived out. The story of Ruth and Naomi would be an example of redemption flowing through family relationships.

The Large Group Celebration and Discipleship in Jesus' Ministry

As we look at the life of Jesus, it is clear that he carried out his ministry in the context of both the large and small group. From the very beginning of his life, we see Jesus engaging in the large group setting. Jesus would have grown up going to the synagogue every Sabbath. The beginning of Jesus' public ministry takes place in the synagogue with the reading of Isaiah 61:1-2 and the announcement that "today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21).

We also see Jesus frequenting the temple. As a young boy, he accompanied his parents to Jerusalem during the Feast of the Passover. Jesus stayed behind when his family left, and when they returned they found him in the temple "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions" (Luke 2:46). In fact, there are eighteen references to Jesus teaching in the temple. In some cases, these are interactions between Jesus and an individual. In other instances Jesus is enacting a parable to teach a lesson, as in the case with the overturning of the money changers tables. And, then there are times when Jesus is teaching a large gathering in the temple compound (Mark 12:35; Luke 21:38; John 8:2). It is safe to assume that in addition to these accounts, there were also many unrecorded instances of Jesus teaching in synagogues and the temple, for Jesus himself acknowledged that he spoke "openly to the world … always (teaching) in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together" (John 18:20).

The Small Group Community and Discipleship in Jesus' Ministry

Although Jesus taught and preached to large crowds, a major focus of his ministry was on the development of the twelve in a relational environment. The selection of the twelve disciples was symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel, and it is in the context of this

community that Jesus taught the disciples what it meant to live as citizens of the Kingdom. In a sense, Jesus was initiating the "forged families," or families made up of self-selecting individuals instead of blood and marriage kin, mentioned by David Brooks in Chapter 1.

During the three years with his disciples, Jesus sought to transform their beliefs and values. This transformation took place while ministering in the homes of ordinary people during the daily rhythm of their lives. It was in a home that Jesus healed Peter's mother, and then healed all those that were brought to him (Matt 8:14). Jesus shared a meal in Matthew's home and responded to the questions and criticisms of the Pharisees (Matt 9:10). Within minutes of becoming acquainted with Zacchaeus, Jesus invited himself over for dinner and then led Zacchaeus into the Kingdom of God (Luke 19:1-10). It was in the home of Mary and Martha that Jesus taught about the priority of sitting at his feet instead of being busy (Luke 10:38-42), and it was in a home that Jesus brought Jairus' daughter back to life (Mark 5:35-38).

Social Space in the Old and New Testament

There are many examples of the social space being utilized in the Scriptures in ways that either could or did further the disciple-making process. In Genesis 21:8-9 Abraham held a feast to celebrate the weaning of Isaac. In the Gospel of John we learn that Jesus and his disciples were invited to a wedding at Cana in Galilee. At the wedding Jesus performs a miracle by turning water into wine. This was the "first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him" (John 2:11). In Luke's Gospel we are told that Matthew "held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them" (Luke 5:29). Jesus uses this time as a teaching moment when he is questioned about eating with "sinners" by the Pharisees.

Social gatherings can serve as a bridge to the public, relational, and intimate spaces. Many would never enter a church building, but they would attend a family celebration or

some other social event. In the social space people forge stronger relationships and begin to acclimatize to the relational culture of the church. In the culture of our churches: these social spaces are sometimes organized around natural affinities, such as men's, women's, senior's, and youth groups arranged by age or gender.

Intimate Space in the Old and New Testament

There are also individual relationships in the Old Testament that are disciple-making in nature. In the *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus uses the same term as the New Testament writers (*mathetes)* when he refers to "Moses and his disciple Joshua."[49] We find similar relationships between Elijah and Elisha, and Jeremiah and Baruch.[50] The scribes "also demonstrate characteristics of a disciple making relationship in that they were "involved in apprentice-type training in the rudimentary skills of their trade—e.g., reading, writing, and transcribing."[51] These types of relationships are modelled in the New Testament as well. While Jesus is often with the twelve disciples, he also chose Peter, James, and John to be in his inner circle. Even within this circle of three, Jesus had a more intimate relationship with John.

In the intimate space (life-on-life disciple-making), two or three same-gendered individuals meet for discovery and discussion around the Bible, and then provide accountability and affirmation in the application of what they are learning.[52] Commenting on the uniqueness of the intimate space, Payne observes that:

> There is a degree of accountability that occurs at the micro-group level that is rarely carried out at the small-group or corporate levels … believers tend to share more of their struggles in a group of two or three same-gendered people, unlike when they are in a mixed group of ten or twelve people.[53]

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[49] Josephus, *the Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 158.

[50] Wilkins*, Following the Master*, 61.

[51] Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 64.

[52] Bill Mowry, *The Ways of the Alongsider* (Colorado, CO: Nav Press, 2016), 13.

[53] J.D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the What's, Whys, and How's of Global Church Planting*, (Colorado Springs, CO: Authentic Publishing, 2009), 107.

Throughout the Bible we see all four relational space modelled and used for the purpose of making disciples. Of the four spaces God has prescribed ongoing structured forms for the public and relational spaces.

God has created us to participate in the Trinitarian community of mutual self-giving love. However, the Fall destroyed community by causing humanity to become self-centered. Since the dawn of time God has had a plan to restore us to community by rebuilding His image in fallen humanity. The rebuilding of the image of God in a person requires a process of transformation that happens in the context of relational environments.

The role of church leaders, then, is to "create an overall system in which people can be placed into environments where they are discipled."[54] Each of the relational spaces is unique and has a part to play in the process of transformation.

Definition of Terms

What is a Disciple?

The word disciple is taken from the Greek word *mathētēs and* occurs 261 times in the New Testament, all of which appear in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. The term first comes into usage during the Greek classical period with the "earliest extant occurrence of the term found in Herodotus (4.77; 5th century B.C.)."[55] A survey of both Greek Classical and Hellenistic literature reveals that the term was widely used to "denote three types of people: a learner, an adherent, and a pupil."[56]

Today the English term disciple carries with it the same ambiguity as it did during the ancient Greek period. Disciple can mean different things to different people depending upon their understanding and interpretation of the word. For some, the word disciple simply means "learner." For others, a disciple is a committed Christian (this distinction would be

[54] Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 129.
[55] Wilkins, *The Concept of Disciple in Matthew's Gospel*, 11.
[56] Wilkins, *Concept of Disciple in Matthew's Gospel*, 11.

intertwined with the Lordship debate).[57] An even more narrow interpretation would view disciples as those who minister.[58] This presents a major obstacle for the church in fulfilling the command to make disciples. The church that does not have a standard, agreed-upon meaning of a disciple will not be united in the vision of what it means to make a disciple. Having a shared definition of a disciple is essential, for as Bill Mowry points out, the "portrait of a disciple becomes the target you aim for in making disciples."[59] Without a shared definition, the church is like a bunch of carpenters trying to build a house without a common blueprint.

The solution to this problem is to seek to understand how Jesus used and understood this term in its historical and literary context.[60] N.T. Wright rightly concludes, "historical exegesis is not simply a matter of laying out the lexicographical meanings of words and sentences. It involves exploring the resonances those words and sentences would have had in their contexts."[61] For Wilkins, this means that we must try to discover what "the discipleship sayings of Jesus mean to those who first heard it while Jesus was with them? What was Jesus' intention in his first-century setting? Once we understand what the discipleship sayings meant to Jesus' original audience, we will be able to take the essential principles and apply them to our own setting."[62]

In the summary of his dissertation, Wilkins concludes that by the end of the Hellenistic period the use of *mathētēs* was being used more regularly to refer to an adherent than to a learner. He goes on to say:

> The progression to "adherent" in Hellenism at the time of Christ and the early church made *mathetes* a convenient term to designate the followers of Jesus, because the emphasis in the common use of the term was not upon "learning," or being a "pupil,"

[57] The Lordship debate is about whether a person must accept Jesus Christ as Lord in order to have Him as Savior.

[58] Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 26–31.

[59] Mowry, *Ways of the Alongsider*, 14.

[60] Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 20

[61] N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 17.

[62] Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 35.

> but upon adherence to a great master. Hence a "disciple" of Jesus, designated by the Greek term *mathetes*, was one who adhered to his master, and the type of adherence was determined by the master himself.[63]

If Wilkins' conclusion is correct, the natural question is what did adherence to Jesus look like? Drawing on Wilkins' work, Bill Hull identifies five traits of a first-century disciple:

1. Deciding to follow a teacher;
2. Memorizing the teachers' words;
3. Imitating the teachers life and character;
4. Learning the teachers' way of ministry;
5. Raising up their own disciples.[64]

All of these traits are present in what Ron Bennet and John Purvis of the Navigators refer to as "the simplest definition of a disciple."[65] This definition is also found in Matthew 4:19 when Jesus said, "follow me, and I will make you into fishers of men." Jim Putman, who is the founder and pastor of Real Life Ministries, asserts that "this invitation to the disciples was the definition as Jesus saw it."[66] The first two words of the Matthean verse are an invitation to follow Jesus. Following was a commitment to follow a teacher, and was at the heart of the transformation process.[67] To a Jewish audience the call to "follow me," (literally "come after me"), would "suggest the disciples of a Rabbi who literally followed him around to absorb his teaching."[68] The goal of a disciple was not merely the acquisition of knowledge, but rather a relationship of transformation where the "one who follows … becomes like the one being followed."[69]

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[63] Wilkins, *Concept of Disciple in Matthew's Gospel*, 217.

[64] Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 63-64.

[65] Ron Bennett and John Purvis, *The Adventure of Discipling Others* (Colorado Springs, Co, NavPress, 2003), 54.

[66] Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 45.

[67] Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 63.

[68] RT France, *Matthew*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), 103.

[69] Bennett and Purvis, *The Adventure of Discipling Others*, 54.

The next five words in this verse ("and I will make you") are about the process of transformation. The Greek word 'make' (*poieō*) speaks to "the creative acts of God."[70] Literally, it means to "cause a person or thing to become something."[71] When someone follows Jesus they are progressively changed into the likeness of Christ. The transformation process would include the memorization of the teachers' words, learning the teachers' way of ministry, and imitating the teachers' life and character.

The last three words (fishers of men) indicate the mission that they are being called into. "When a disciple finished his training, he was expected to reproduce what he'd learned by finding and training his own apprentices."[72] A disciple is one who follows Jesus and is transformed by Jesus, so that they can help others do the same.

What is Discipleship and Discipling?

Discipleship and discipling are English words derived from the word "disciple."[73] Bill Hull defines discipleship as the "term I use to describe our own following Christ."[74] Wilkins fleshes out Hull's definition by adding that "Discipleship is, therefore, not one thing that I do; rather, discipleship summarizes all the activities of my personal, family, and church life."[75] This addition is helpful in that it presents a picture of discipleship that is holistic.

What is Disciple Making? (Discipling)

While discipleship is about the individual's pursuit of Jesus, disciple making is about how one person helps another to pursue Jesus. The phrase "make disciples" is an English translation of the Greek word *matheteusate*. Like the word disciple, disciple making carries with it a degree of ambiguity. Mark Dever, pastor at Capitol Hill Baptist Church, defines discipling as "deliberately doing spiritual good to someone so that he or she will become

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[70] W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 701.
[71] W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words,* 702.
[72] Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ,* 64.
[73] Wilkins, *Follow the Master*, 41.
[74] Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 13.
[75] Wilkins, *Follow the Master*, 238.

more like Christ."[76] A positive element of this definition is that it identifies the goal of disciple making as becoming more like Christ. However, it lacks any mention of the centrality of relationship as the "appropriate context for the disciple making process."[77] It also lacks any mention of multiplication.

In his book, *Discipling in a Multicultural Word*, Ajith Fernanda defines disciple-making as "an affectionate relationship of caring between people who see themselves as having a parent-child relationship."[78] This definition does a good job of highlighting the relational aspect of disciple making, and the parenting analogy implies multiplication, but it makes no mention of the goal of making disciples, and makes no mention of the goal of disciple making.

A third definition offered by Hull is "one who voluntarily submits to at least one other person in a healthy and appropriate way as a means of support and accountability to develop as a follower of Jesus."[79] This statement affirms the primacy of a relationship, as well as the intentionality that is required to provide support and accountability, but it lacks a clear picture of both a disciple as well the importance of multiplication.

Drawing upon Wilkins' five traits of a first-century disciple, disciple-making could be defined as "intentional relationship, marked by love and rooted in the Word of God, which seeks to help another know and become like Jesus so that they can imitate his ministry of raising up more disciples."[80]This definition captures the essence of the Great Commandment in that it mentions "an intentional relationship rooted in love." It also covers Wilkins' point about "memorizing the teachers' words by rooting the relationship in the word of God. The third thing this definition does is that it captures Wilkins' emphasis about imitating the

[76] Dever, *Discipling,* 13

[77] Mowry, *Ways of the Alongsider*, 14.

[78] Ajith Fernanda, *Discipling in a Multicultural World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 27.

[79] Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 67.

[80] Credit must be given to Vicki Jaster, Jamie Strickland, and Darci Kovac for their input on this definition.

teacher's life and character with the phrase "becoming like Jesus." The fourth and fifth traits are included when it is stated that "they can imitate his ministry of raising up more disciples." The last thing this definition does is it unites evangelism under the umbrella of discipleship. It does this by including the word "know." Knowing God is the first step in the journey of faith.

CONCLUSION

It is important to clarify the biblical and theological principles that are central to the discussion. This provides a framework for understanding the question and any possible solutions. By explaining key concepts such as community, process, relational environments, and key terms of the discussion, we can then begin to consider possible solutions to the PBD for disciple making.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Having provided a theological framework and definitions for the basic terms of discussion, it is time to pursue a biblical process for discipleship that will replace the PBD at West Highland Church. To this end we will seek to bring various authoritative authors on the discipleship process into conversation with one another and with the reader. The interaction with these authors will be critical in nature as points of agreement and disagreement are noted. We will consider Rick Warren's "Life Development Process," found in his influential book *The Purpose Driven Church.* Next, we will consult pastor and author, Jim Putman, who created the "Five Stages of Development Process." The third source will be Aubrey Malphur's "5C process," which identifies the five characteristics of a mature disciple taken from Acts 2:41–47. Before bringing these authors into conversation with one another, however, a summary of each process will be provided.

Rick Warren's Life Development Process

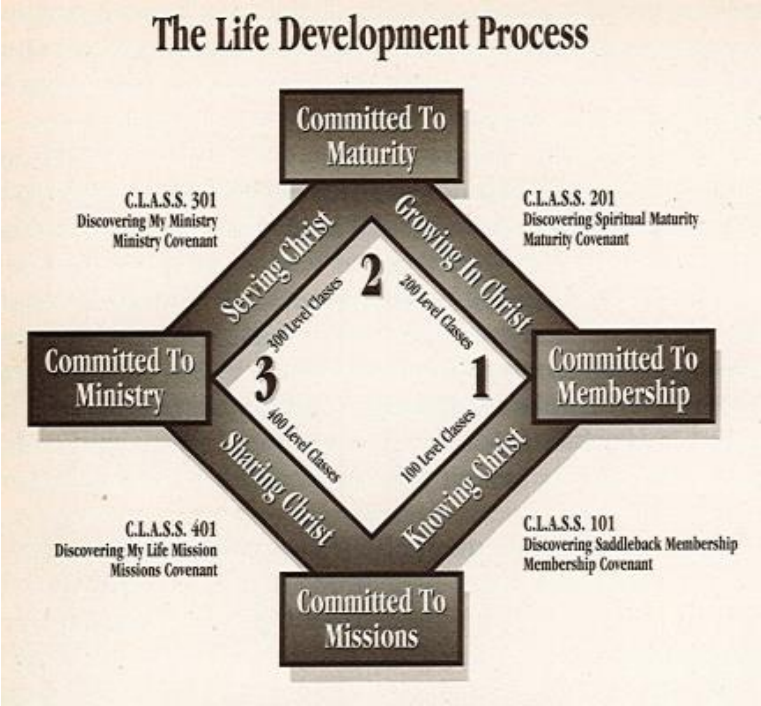
The Life Development Process (LDP) is a strategy for church health that comes out of Warren's book *The Purpose Driven Church*. The goal of the LDP is to build a healthy church that usually results in numerical church growth. According to Warren, the reason why Western churches do not experience healthy growth is because they are driven by the wrong things such as tradition, personality, finances, programs, buildings, events, and seekers.[1] To solve this problem Warren identifies five New Testament purposes of the church. These purposes are taken from the Great Commandment to love God and to love others in Matthew 22:37-40, and the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations in Matthew 28:19-20.[2] They are:

[1] Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI:, Zondervan, 1995), 75–79.

[2] Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 102.

1. Love the Lord with all your heart (the word used to describe this purpose is worship).
2. Love your neighbor as yourself (the word used to describe this purpose is ministry).
3. Go and make disciples (the word used to describe this purpose is evangelism).
4. Baptizing them (the word used to describe this purpose is fellowship).
5. Teaching them to obey (the word used to describe this purpose is discipleship).[3]

Figure 5: The Life Development Process



These five purposes are illustrated as a process using the analogy of a baseball diamond.[4] (See Figure 5) Each base represents a level of spiritual development. The objective of the process is to move people from membership (fellowship) to maturity (discipleship), to ministry (service), and finally to missions (evangelism). Worship is at the center of the diamond as it is central to the Christian life.

[3] Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 103-106.
[4] Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 144.

Jim Putman's Five Stages of Discipleship

Jim Putman used the image of physical growth to design the Five Stages of Discipleship process. The first stage (or level 1) is the spiritually dead. This stage describes those who are "dead in their transgressions and sins" (Eph 2:1). These people have not received Christ, nor the Holy Spirit and need the rebirth Jesus teaches about in John chapter three.

The second stage is the spiritual infant. These people have experienced the new birth but are like newborn babies who need spiritual milk so that they can grow up in their salvation (I Pet. 2:2). In Putman's view, these people can be brand-new believers or long-time Christians who have stagnated in their faith. Spiritual infants tend to "lack knowledge and are in need of truth."[5]

Stage three is that of the spiritual child. "People in this stage are continuing to grow in their relationship with God, and they are beginning to grow in their relationships with other Christians as well … (however) much of their spiritual life still revolves around them—meeting their needs, their desires, and their interests."[6] Their primary need is to be connected to other Christians who can teach them how to make the transition from self-centeredness to other centeredness, and from dependency to self-sufficiency.

Young adulthood is the fourth stage of the discipleship process. During this time "spiritual young adults are making a shift from being self-centered to being God-and others-centered. They are beginning to reorient their lives around God's Word and his people and mission."[7] The primary needs are the opportunity to serve and equipping for the mission.

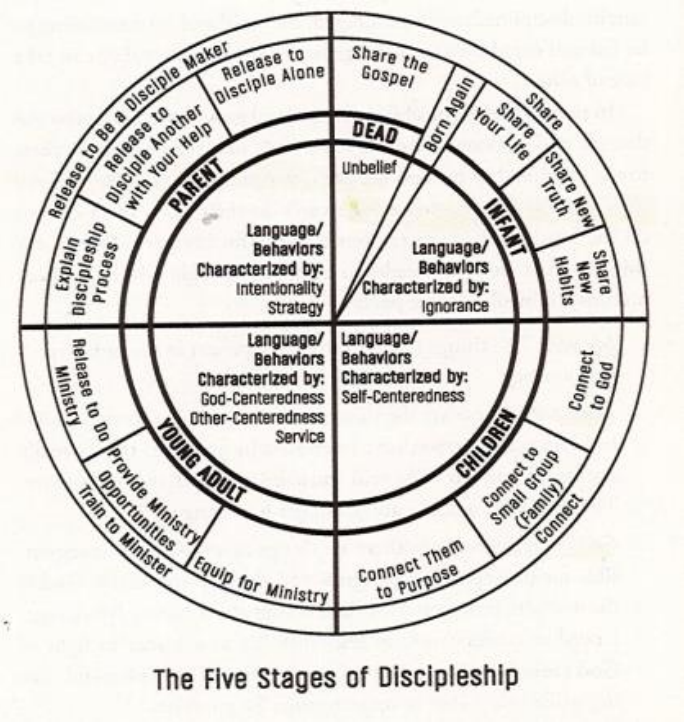
[5] Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington, *Discipleshift*: *Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 63.

[6] Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 65.

[7] Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 67.

The last stage is that of parenthood. Those who reach this stage are discipling others and seeing those people multiply their ministry. In time, a spiritual parent will have spiritual generations of disciples. Parents are characterized by intentionality in their own spiritual life as well as in their desire to invest in others. The primary need for the parent is peer support for the purpose of edification and encouragement.

Figure 6: Five Stages of Discipleship



The Five Stages of Discipleship

Figure 6 illustrates how the five stages of development work. It consists of four concentric circles that are broken into four quadrants. Each quadrant (except the first quadrant which is divided into two sections: the spiritually dead and infants) represents a stage of discipleship. The stage is listed in the third circle moving from the outside of the circle toward the middle.

In the outer circle (starting at the twelve o'clock position and moving clockwise) we see the following categories: share, connect, train to minister, and release to be a disciple maker. These are the broad categories of action that the disciple maker is to take to move the disciple toward spiritual maturity. In the second circle (moving from the outside of the diagram to the middle) the broad categories of action are broken down into more specific action steps.

The inner circle lists the fundamental characteristics of the person belonging to each stage. These language and behavior traits help identify where a person is at spiritually in their

relationship with God."[8] For example, if a person says that they don't believe in God, then that reveals that they are spiritually dead and need to have the gospel shared with them.

Aubrey Malphurs' "5 C" Process

In his book, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, Aubrey Malphurs poses the following question: "If a mature disciple were to walk through the doors of your church, what would he or she look like?" He continues by stating that "the characteristics that mark this person become the goals for your people—the attributes or characteristics of an individual's life that reflect the achievement of the mission."[9] To identify these characteristics, Malphurs points us to what F.F. Bruce calls the ideal picture of the first Christian Church found in Acts 2:41–47,

> So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.[10]

In this passage Malphurs believes that Luke is emphasizing the following five characteristics of a mature disciple:

1) Worship
    a. Prayer (v.42).
    b. Meeting in the temple courts daily (v.46).
    c. Praising God (v. 47).

2) Fellowship
    a. They devoted themselves to…fellowship (v. 42).
    b. The breaking of bread (v. 42).

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[8] Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 62.

[9] Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 197.

[10] Unless otherwise stated, all biblical quotes are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001).

c. All the believers were together and had everything in common (v.44).
d. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts (v. 46).

3) Bible study
    a. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching (v. 42).

4) Evangelism
    a. Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day (v. 41).
    b. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (v. 47).

5) Service or ministry
    a. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need (v. 45).
    b. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts (v. 46).

Each of these five characteristics is incorporated into a sequential process and identified with a word beginning with the letter C. (See Figure 7)

Figure 7 The 5 C Process

Conversion (Evangelism)	Community (Fellowship)	Celebration (Worship)	Cultivation (Bible Instruction)	Contribution (Service)

These five areas become the primary ministries of the church because it is through them that people are assimilated into the church and move toward spiritual maturity. As the members of a church progressively embrace each characteristic into their lives, they assume a posture that is conducive to spiritual transformation.[11]

Having summarized each of the three processes, it is time to bring the authors into conversation with one another around topics that are key to a biblical process.

[11] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 197.

Disciple Making Dialogue

The following conversation surrounding disciple-making will be summarized under two parts; the mission of the church and the strategy to fulfill the mission. In the following section we will bring various authors into conversation with one another around this two-fold framework.

The Mission of the Church

One of the most important tasks of a leader is to define the mission of the organization. In *The Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey writes, "Mission statements are … vital to successful organizations. One of the most important thrusts of my work with organizations is to assist them in developing effective mission statements."[12] Peter Drucker echoes this perspective in his book, *Managing the Non-Profit Organization*, stating that, "What matters is not the leader's charisma. What matters is the leader's mission."[13] Defining your mission is vital to the organization, for as Malphurs notes, it answers the "fundamental question of the ministry: What are we supposed to be doing? Or where are we going? People on board the ministry ship want to know where it's heading, where it is going to land."[14]

When it comes to the mission of the church we do not have the freedom to apply a definition of our own choosing, for Malphurs rightly observes that "after his resurrection and before his ascension (Jesus) gave the church its mission (see Matt 28:19–20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:45–49; Acts 1:8)."[15] Putman also views the Great Commission as the authoritative text on the mission of the church, stating that the "church exists to make *disciples who make disciples*."[16] By adding the phrase "who make disciples," Putman is emphasizing Wilkins'

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[12] Stephen R. Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People—Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (New York, NY: Simon & Shuster, 1989), 139.
[13] As quoted in Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 107.
[14] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 106.
[15] Malphurs. *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 105.
[16] Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 38.

fifth characteristic of a disciple (that a disciple will raise up their own disciples). While this is implied in the first-century meaning of the word disciple, it is a much-needed emphasis in the 21st century because, for many, the first century meaning of disciple is unclear.

In *The Purpose Driven Church*, Warren proposes that two statements of Jesus summarize what the church is to be and to do: the Great Commandment (Matt 22:37-40) and the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20).[17] While Warren also views the Great Commission as pivotal in defining the mission of the church, he qualifies the definition by adding love as the guiding principle in our motivation for making disciples. This too is a valuable addition as it attempts to protect the church from dehumanizing the Great Commission by making it into a program of the church.

All three authors identify the Great Commission as the primary source for the mission of the church. The fact that each takes the liberty to emphasize certain aspects of the commission by adding words or supporting verses, serves as an example of contextualizing the mission of the church to the ministry context while remaining faithful to the biblical text.

The Strategy to Fulfill the Mission

Aubrey Malphurs defines strategy as "the process that determines how your ministry will accomplish its mission."[18] Warren makes a similar connection between mission and the strategy, stating that "if it is the church's objective to develop disciples, then we must think through a process that will accomplish that goal."[19] Putman views the creation of a process as the responsibility of leaders who are called to "lead in the development of a church-wide system that will make disciples who make disciples."[20] While all three authors agree that a strategy is needed to accomplish the mission, the three strategies that they put forward are not identical. We will encounter points of agreement and disagreement, as well as areas of

[17] Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 102.
[18] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 171.
[19] Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 109.
[20] Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 120.

strength and weakness as we compare our authors' strategies. Our goal is to draw out common principles that will provide a framework for an improved disciple-making process.

Strengths of the Three Processes

There is a consensus among our authors that the best strategy to fulfill the mission is to create a disciple-making process. An obvious strength of this approach is that a process capitalizes on the four benefits of clarity, movement, alignment, and focus laid out by Geiger and Rainer in their book *Simple Church.*

Clarity

The first benefit of a process is clarity. According to Rainer and Geiger "clarity is the ability of the process to be communicated and understood by the people."[21] This is essential if we want a church to be unified, for, as Putman notes, "Whenever any group sets out to work together to accomplish a goal, the tasks, methods, and objectives need to be defined, clearly communicated, and understood by everyone involved."[22] When this is achieved Malphurs concludes that the congregation benefits because it has "a simple, memorable pathway for making disciples (that) helps them to know where they are in the process."[23] This eliminates any confusion about what the next step is in a person's spiritual journey. Without this awareness, the church becomes stagnant as people do not understand what the next step is in their spiritual journey.

Movement

Another benefit of a process is movement. "Movement is the sequential steps in the process that cause people to move to greater (levels) of commitment (and relationship)."[24]

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[21] Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 111.
[22] Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 41.
[23] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 92-93.
[24] Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church*, 72.

This involves the process of moving people from wherever you find them (lost or saved) along a continuum toward maturity."[25] Malphurs references Rick Warren's baseball diamond as an example of a process that does a good job of facilitating movement.

> Pastor Rick Warren uses a baseball diamond to illustrate his church's strategy. The church encourages each member to work his or her way around the bases from first base to home plate. First base represents knowing Christ; second base growing in Christ; third base, serving Christ; and home plate, sharing Christ. As members fulfill the requirements of each base, they experience not only a sense of accomplishment but also a sense of spiritual movement. They are not "sitting and soaking" or treading water but are moving forward in their walk with Christ. At the same time, they know where they are spiritually and precisely where they need to go. That is spiritual ministry momentum. We might ask, where does a congregant go when he or she has reached home plate? My answer would be to lead another person around the base paths. That too would contribute to spiritual momentum."[26]

Alignment

A third benefit of our authors' processes is that of alignment. "Alignment is the arrangement of all ministries and staff around the same simple process."[27] According to Malphurs, "Once the church has identified the characteristics of spiritual maturity … the next step is to determine the primary ministries that will move the characteristics from your navigational charts into the lives of your congregation."[28] This means that "your programs must be submissive to your process."[29] Putman agrees: "the principle of alignment requires that every program and ministry of a church exists in harmony with the overall goal of making disciples."[30]

To make this sustainable, the organizational structure must be created with the process in mind so that the two can work together, for as Warren points out, "there must be a structure to nurture and support (the process). It is not enough to merely define a purpose statement and communicate it, you must also organize your church around your

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[25] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 196.
[26] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 169-170.
[27] Rainer and Geiger, *Simple* Church, 74.
[28] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 198.
[29] Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church*, 116.
[30] Putman and Harrington, *Discipeshift*, 171.

purposes."[31]Without a supporting organizational structure the church will inevitably default back into "ministry silos" and into a program-based strategy.

Focus

The last benefit of a process is focus. "Focus is the commitment to abandon everything that falls outside of the simple ministry process."[32] Both Warren and Putman view focus as a necessary ingredient for the church to be effective in accomplishing its mission. "A focused life and a focused church," writes Warren, "will have a far greater impact than unfocused ones. Like a laser beam, the more focused your church becomes, the more impact it will have on society."[33] Putman believes that part of the solution to accomplishing our mission happens "when a church shifts in focus to biblical discipleship using the methodology of relational environments."[34] These relational environments are created by leaders in the various stages of the process because it is when people inhabit these spaces that they experience transformation.

Limitations of the Three Processes

Having identified the strengths of the three processes, it is now time to consider the limitations of each strategy. These limitations will be considered under four headings: 1) faulty steps within the process; 2) the limitations of the intended audience; 3) the lack of both an individual and corporate focus; and 4) missing components.

Faulty or Missing Steps within the Process

The similarities and differences of our authors' processes become readily apparent when placed in juxtaposition to one another. In the chart below, the various parts of the process have been grouped together under the headings of worship, fellowship, service, evangelism, and discipleship. These groupings do not necessarily reflect the order in which

[31] Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 122.
[32] Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church*, 203.
[33] Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 89.
[34] Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 30.

each process has been constructed. Warren's process begins with knowing Christ because the Life Development Process is designed with the seeker in mind. Both Malphurs and Putman begin their process with evangelism because their processes are designed with the mature disciple maker in mind. The relevance of the intended audience will be addressed in the next section entitled "intended audience."

The most noticeable difference is that Putman's Five Stages of Discipleship process only has four steps whereas Malphurs and Warren both have five. Warren and Malphurs include worship whereas Putman does not. For Warren and Malphurs, worship is the ultimate purpose of the Christian life. Warren places worship in the middle of his diagram, while Malphurs places worship after someone has been led to faith in Christ and has been connected to community. It could be argued that worship is implied in Putman's process under the heading "connect to God." However, the lack of an explicit reference to worship is a limitation.

Under the headings of fellowship, service, and evangelism, all three authors are of the same mind. The only difference is the nomenclature. What Warren and Malphurs refer to as fellowship, Putman terms connect. The same is true of service and evangelism where Putman has chosen different terminology with parallel meanings. (See Table 1)

Table 1: Process Comparison

Author	**Worship**	**Fellowship**	**Service**	**Evangelism**	**Discipleship**
Warren	Worship	Fellowship	Service	Evangelism	Discipleship
Malphurs	Worship	Fellowship	Service	Evangelism	Biblical Instruction
Putman		Connect	Train to Minister	Share	Release to be a disciple maker

One of the most significant differences centers on the category of discipleship. Rick Warren uses the term discipleship. Taken in context of *The Purpose Driven Church*, Warren is referring to growth in spiritual maturity. Commenting on the use of discipleship as a stand-alone category, Bill Hull states that it is damaging,

> when churches categorize discipleship as just one of the ministries of the church, rather than the core of the ministry. When discipleship takes a place alongside leadership, evangelism, preaching, worship, counseling, support groups, and other programs, it ceases to be what it was meant to be: the heart of what it means to be a Christian.[35]

Wilkins shares Hull's criticism, stating that "since all true Christians are disciples, the ministry of the church may be seen in its broadest sense as 'discipleship'. Various ministries within the church should be seen as specialization, aspects, or stages of discipleship training."[36]This criticism is warranted, for if discipleship is a process made up of a series of steps, then to name one step "discipleship" undermines the other steps that are not referred to as such. In other words, when we categorize one of the steps as discipleship, we inadvertently communicate that the remaining parts are not discipleship (or at the very least less about discipleship). In the case of the Life Development Process, one part of the process cannot be designated as discipleship when all the steps are needed to make a mature disciple. The inclusion of discipleship as one of the steps has the potential to sow confusion regarding the very definition of discipleship as well as the strategy to make disciples.

In a similar fashion, Malphurs' use of biblical instruction can create confusion. This category was taken from Acts 2:42 which reads, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." The designation of biblical instruction as one of the steps within the process begs the question why the other

[35] Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 36.

[36] Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 44.

spiritual practices in this verse don't have a category of their own? Why, for example, does not prayer have its own category in the process? It could be argued that Biblical instruction is not a step in the process, but rather an action that helps the process to be realized. If this is so, then Biblical instruction should be present within every step of the process.

Putman uses the phrase "Release to be a disciple maker" as the last step in his process. The focus on spiritual reproduction is important to Putman, and should be important to all Christians. However, it could be argued that spiritual reproduction is not a stage of the disciple making process, but rather is a measure of spiritual maturity. In Jesus' day the expectation of spiritual reproduction and multiplication was explicit in the definition of a disciple. Today these expectations must be made clear, but Putman's goal could have been achieved by including the definition of a disciple in the process.

Intended Audience

A process can also be limited by its intended audience. Rick Warren's Life Development Process is an example of a process that was designed with the seeker in mind. This can be deduced from the first step of the process being "knowing Christ." It is difficult to critique a process that has been so impactful in evangelism. In 2018 Saddleback church celebrated its fifty thousandth baptism![37] However, the fact remains that the process is presented from the perspective of the unconverted. This is rooted in Warren's philosophy of church planting, which grows from the "outside in" (the unconverted community) instead of the "inside out" (committed core of believers).

On the other end of the spectrum is Putman's Five Stages of Discipleship process. This model is presented from the perspective of the mature disciple maker. This is evidenced by using the verbs share, connect, train, and release. These are the actions of the one who is

[37] "Celebrating 50 000 Changed Lives", *Saddleback Church*, August 1, 2018, Accessed May 20, 2023, www.saddleback.com/watch/news/2018/08/01/Celebrating-50000-Changed-Lives

discipling another person. This one-dimensional perspective limits the usefulness of the process in that it is helpful for the mature Christian, but it does not provide a clear pathway of growth for those who are in the earlier stages of faith.

Malphurs' process is also aimed at the mature believer with a focus on church leaders who are encouraged to use the five C's to construct a ministry matrix where you

> fill in the characteristics of a mature disciple along the top of the horizontal access. Next, fill in your current primary ministries or your pathway along the side on the vertical axis in assimilation order. Now, from a design perspective, ask, Do the primary ministries focus on and serve as means to accomplish one or more of the characteristics of maturity?[38]

It is not clear in Malphurs' book if the five characteristics are intended to be made available to the congregation or if they are meant exclusively for leaders. To not clearly communicate the disciple making strategy, and the organizational structure that supports it, would leave members feeling that they do not know "how the different parts of the church work together."[39] This leaves members with the "impression that the organizational structure of the church hinders church life rather than promoting it."[40]

Ideally a process should be comprehensible to anyone who walks through the doors of a church. The mature Christian should know the stages of the process and what is expected of them if they are to grow in spiritual maturity. The unbeliever should be able to look at the process and understand what their first step is and how the church organizes itself. Lastly, the leadership of the church should be able to use the process to lead their congregation toward spiritual maturity in Christ.

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[38] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 202-203.

[39] This phrase is taken from the 2018 Natural Church Development report from West Highland survey. See Appendix A.

[40] This phrase is taken from the 2018 Natural Church Development Report from West Highland survey. See Appendix A.

Corporate versus Individual Discipleship

There is a tendency within many Christian organizations to emphasize either the role of the church or the individual in discipleship. For example, many parachurch organizations emphasize the role of the individual through one-on-one discipleship, personal quiet times, and an individual approach to evangelism. On the other hand, many churches concentrate much of their time and resources on the development of gatherings that take place in the public and social spaces. Commenting on a need for a balance in both areas, Malphurs states that:

> Not only does the Christian have a role in his or her transformation process-maturation process, but the Church plays a big role as well. The Christian's role is personal and individual. The church's role, however, is public and corporate. We mature together in community (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35). We in Christ's body need each other (1 Cor 12:12-31). And the church's role is to design a disciple-maturing process that the Holy Spirit may use in concert with a community of believers to accomplish this task. [41]

While all the processes include both the individual and corporate space, they do not clearly differentiate between the two. Some of this ambiguity stems from the faulty or misnamed steps mentioned earlier. In the case of Warren, it seems that what he labels discipleship is the equivalent of one-on-one disciple making. For Malphurs, despite making the distinction between corporate and individual discipleship, it is not clear how this distinction is made in his process. For Putman, most of the Five Stages of Discipleship are individual based, except for "connect to small group."

Missing Components

Another potential limitation of a process is missing components. The following components are not primary ministries of the church, but serve to support, remind, and

[41] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 199.

provide power to the process. The definition of a disciple, the Holy Spirit, prayer, and the Word of God are four aspects that are too important to not be included in any process of disciple making.

Definition of a Disciple

The definition of a disciple provides the church with a picture of what it is trying to build. Without an agreed upon definition, we cannot be united in our building efforts. The importance that Putman places on a shared definition of a disciple was acknowledged in chapter two. The closest that Malphurs comes to a definition of a disciple is the five characteristics outlines in his process. These characteristics, says Malphurs, "become the goals of your people—the attributes or characteristics of an individual's life that reflect the achievement of the mission."[42] Warren also would see the five purposes of the church as synonymous with what a disciple is. In spite of this, none of the three authors incorporates a definition of a disciple into their process.

While there is much to commend in Putman's definition of a disciple, it fails to acknowledge the distinct function that each member of the Trinity has in the work of redemption. Theology Professor Wayne Grudem provides a brief summary of these distinctions in his systematic theology.

> God the Father planned redemption and sent his Son into the world (John 3:16; Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:9-10). The Son obeyed the Father and accomplished redemption for us (John 6:38; Heb. 10:5-7; et al.). God the Father did not come and die for our sins, nor did God the Holy Spirit. That was the particular work of the Son. Then, after Jesus ascended back into heaven, the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son to apply redemption to us.[43]

This is not a case of theological nit-picking. By attributing all of the functions of redemption and disciple making to Jesus, many churches relegate the Father and the Holy Spirit to the

[42] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 197.
[43] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic* Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 249.

sidelines of church life. A.W. Tozer articulated this reality poignantly when he penned the following words.

> In most Christian churches the Spirit is entirely overlooked. Whether He is present or absent males no real difference to anyone. Brief reference is made to Him in the Doxology and the Benediction. Further than that, He might as well not exist. So completely do we ignore Him that it is only by courtesy that we that we can be called Trinitarian…The idea of the Spirit held by the average church member is so vague as to be nearly non-existent.[44]

By assigning the proper roles to each member of the Godhead, the church is able to pray properly and to discern the movement of God in ways that align with realty.

The Role of the Holy Spirit

Ed Stetzer clarifies the importance of the roles of the Trinity when he articulates the relationship between the Holy Spirit and making disciples, "Disciple making is the Spirit's work, but our work is to develop an intentional plan to allow the Spirit's work to be most effective."[45] Geiger and Rainer echo that thought, maintaining that "the word transform is in the passive voice and present tense. The passive voice indicates that we do not transform ourselves. God is the one who does the transforming."[46] Michael Wilkins is even more emphatic, stating that "after Pentecost, Jesus emphasized that the Holy Spirit is the key to discipleship. The Spirit is the One who convicts unbelievers, regenerates new believers, and causes growth. We must allow for the work of the Spirit in all that we do while making disciples."[47] In light of this, we must not lose sight of the Holy Spirit in the work of making disciples.

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[44] J. Oswald Sanders, *The Holy Spirit and His Gifts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 10. Author does not cite source for this quotation.

[45] Ed Stetzer, *Transformational Groups* (Nashville: B & H Publishing House, 2014), 48.

[46] Geiger and Reiner, *Simple Church*, 138.

[47] Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 120.

Warren, Malphurs, and Putman would all acknowledge the importance of the Holy Spirit in discipleship, but the Spirit is awkwardly absent in all their processes. Putman declares that "the Spirit of God is the one who ultimately does the work of God in our lives."[48] If the Spirit of God is so central in discipleship, then one would think that some visual reminder would be appropriate, for as Timothy Beougher aptly reminds us, "what doesn't get listed gets forgotten."[49]

An example of overlooking the Spirit is seen in a statement made by Navigator and discipleship author Justin Gravitt in a Blog entitled "How long does it take to make a disciple?" In this blog Gravitt compares how much time Jesus invested into the development of the twelve disciples with how much time a typical Christian invests in making a disciple:

> While Jesus took over 1,460 hours to make a disciple, churches do it in far less time. Consider the most generous scenario for these discipleship groups. Let's say they meet weekly for two hours a session for a year. After 52 weeks, they would have spent 156 hours together. Yet, since there are two disciples and one leader in the group, each disciple *could have* had focused individual attention for just 78 hours.[50]

The point that Gravitt is making is that if we want to make disciples the way Jesus did, then it will require much more time than the church has typically allotted. What this comparison seems to overlook is the unique dynamic of the indwelling Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. Commenting on this new reality, Wilkins writes that, "during the earthly ministry of Jesus, his disciples could see his life and direct their ways to be like him. After Pentecost a spiritual relationship would be established through the indwelling Spirit that would transform the disciple into the image of Christ from the inside-out."[51]

Jesus said that it was good that he was going away because he would send the Holy Spirit (John 16:7). The Spirit would guide them into all truth (John 16:13) and would teach

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[48] Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 139.
[49] From a lecture during a Doctor of Ministry seminar in Singapore, January 2023.
[50] Justin Gravitt, *How Long Does It Take to Make A Disciple?*, https://www.justingravitt.com/blog/how-long-does-it-take-to-make-a-disciple, Accessed January 22, 2024.
[51] Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 133.

them all things (John 14:26). It would be through the Spirit that men and women would be born again (John 3:5) and would be continually renewed (Titus 3:5). Jesus said that whoever believes in him will do greater things than he did because he was going to the Father (John 14:13).

Through the Spirit, Jesus is closer and more intimate with us than He was with the disciples pre-Pentecost. He lives in us and is working in us twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Commenting on this new level of intimacy, Wilkins says that "Jesus' disciples would become like him in a unique way. The spiritual unity that would be established between Jesus and his disciples – Jesus in them and they in Jesus (John 17:13–26) guaranteed a likeness quite unknown in any other kind of discipleship relationship."[52] We should be able to mature faster than the pre-Pentecost disciples because of the Spirit of God.

Such knowledge removes the weight of feeling as though we are ultimately responsible for a person's spiritual growth and development. Our job, as junior partners, "is to develop an intentional plan to allow the Spirit's work to be most effective. An old proverb says, "You can't control the wind, but you can adjust your sails."[53] The most effective plan is to create a disciple making process with corresponding relational environments that will act as a sail to catch the wind of the Spirit in the lives of men and women.

Prayer

When we survey the life of Jesus, we see that prayer was a high priority. Before choosing the disciples, we are told that Jesus spent an entire night in prayer (Luke 6:12–13). Often Jesus would go away by himself to pray (Matt 14:23). He taught about prayer (Matthew 6:9–13), He took Peter, John, and James up a mountain to pray (Luke 9:28). The night before his death, Jesus told Peter that he prayed that Peter's faith would not fail (Luke

[52] Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 133.
[53] Stetzer, *Transformational Groups*, 48.

22:32). Clearly, prayer was a vital part of Jesus disciple making strategy. However, once again, there is no mention of prayer in our authors' processes. If prayer is vital to the work of making disciples, then it should be incorporated into every aspect of the process.

The Word of God

Jesus was constantly using the Word of God in his ministry. When tempted in the wilderness Jesus cited the Word of God to counter Satan's temptations. He began his public ministry by reading the Word of God (Luke 4:16–19). Jesus would often quote directly from Old Testament books when teaching. Once again, while our authors would undoubtedly agree with the centrality of the Bible in disciple-making, there is little mention of it in their processes. Malphurs allots the most space to the Word of God by designating one of the steps of his process "Biblical instruction." Putman's process has one reference to the Word of God at the beginning of his process where he instructs us to "Share the Gospel." Rick Warren's LDP has no mention of the Word of God at all. One could argue that the centrality of the Word of God should be assumed throughout each process. While this may be true, not having a visual reminder of this is a limitation.

The work of Warren, Malphurs, and Putman provide us with very helpful models of a disciple making process. What is clear from their contributions is that a simple process provides clarity, movement, alignment, and focus. The interaction with these three authors, as well as others who have made significant contribution in discipleship, has revealed the strengths and limitations of these three processes. The following section will attempt to present a process that embraces the strengths and proposes some minor improvements.

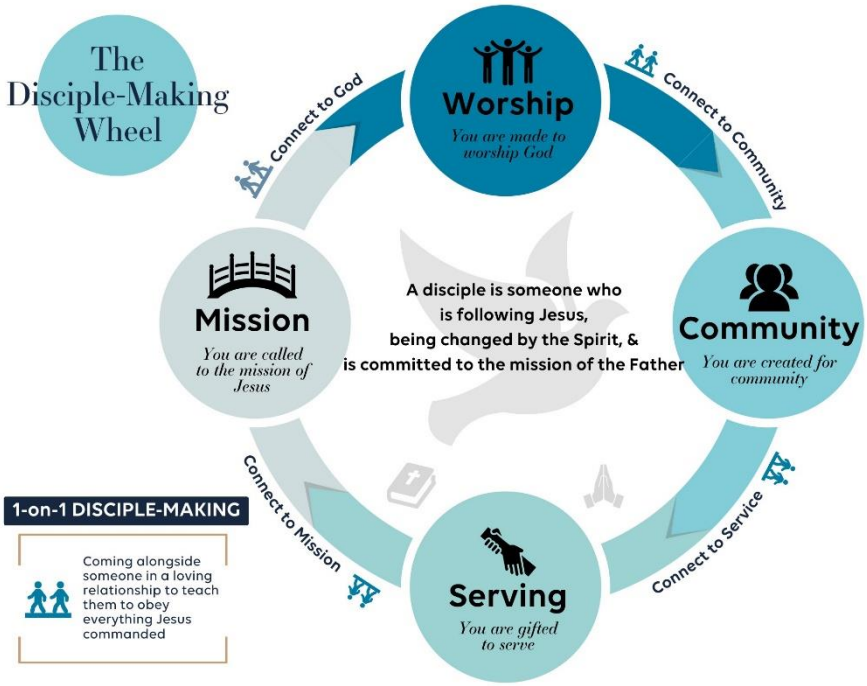
Proposed Process

Having considered the strengths and limitations of the three processes, it is time to incorporate the strengths and build upon the limitations identified in the previous dialogue.

The following process will follow the five-step example provided by Warren and Malphurs, with a minor modification in the step labelled discipleship and Bible instruction, respectively. The five areas will include worship, community, service, mission, and one-on-one disciple-making. (Figure 8)

The four limitations identified were the absence of a definition of a disciple, the Holy Spirit, prayer, and the Word of God. These four areas will be incorporated into the process with images to remind the church of their importance.

Figure 8: The Disciple Making Wheel



Definition of a Disciple

In chapter two it was established that having a shared definition of a disciple is essential, because the "portrait of a disciple becomes the target you aim for in making disciples."[54] Without a shared definition, the church is like a bunch of carpenters trying to

[54] Bill Mowry, T*he Ways of the Alongsider* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2016), 14.

build a house without a common blueprint. With this in mind, a Trinitarian version of the definition highlighted in chapter two by Bennet, Purvis, and Putman will be incorporated into the proposed process.

The Holy Spirit

Underlying the definition of a disciple is a picture of a dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit. If we believe, as Putman stated, that "the Spirit of God is the one who ultimately does the work of God in our lives,"[55] then it seems fitting to have an image at the center of the process that reminds us of this truth.

The Word of God

The second characteristic of a disciple identified by Wilkin's study was the memorization of the teachers' words. With this being such an important part of what it means to be a disciple, the Word of God should permeate every aspect of the process and be declared within each relational environment of the process. The Word should be preached during Sunday morning worship, it should be discussed and applied in small group community. The Word should be referenced in the context of both serving and evangelism. And those in one-on-one disciple making relationships should be taught to hear, read, study, memorize, and meditate on the Word of God. A picture of a Bible is placed under the dove in the center of the process.

Prayer

Wilkins' third and fourth characteristic of a disciple are to imitate the teacher's life and character, and to learn the teachers' way of ministry.[56] Prayer was certainly a significant part of both of these, and as such is another discipline of the faith that should permeate every

[55] Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift,* 139.
[56] Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 63–64.

aspect of the process. Prayer should inhabit the praises of God's people when they gather for worship. Christians should pray for one another and intercede for the lost when they meet in small group community. Prayer should be used in service and in evangelism, as well as in the context of one-on-on disciple making. To remind the church of this, a picture of two hands praying have been placed under the dove in the middle of the process.

Worship

Worship is the beginning of the Christian life. Once we come to realize who God is, and who we are in relation to Him, the proper response is worship. In this sense then, worship should encompass every aspect of the Christian life, for as Paul exhorted "so whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31). It is for this reason that worship has been placed at the beginning of the proposed process (the twelve o'clock position).

If the job of church leaders is to identify the primary ministries of the church, then the next step would be to create a relational environment within this primary ministry. For the church, the main relational environment for worship is Sunday morning. The corporate gathering of the local church is a time for encouragement (Heb 10:24–25), and celebration of the resurrection of the Lord. "Such a time of corporate worship … includes singing, the Lord's supper, studying the Scriptures, prayer, (and) fellowship. During this corporate gathering of the entire church, growth in faith should occur in the lives of its members."[57] God uses the public environment to supernaturally transform the hearts and affections of His people.

[57] J.D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2009), 106.

Community

The second primary ministry identified in the proposed process is community. Like worship, varying degrees of community should happen in every facet of the church, but the best place for community to thrive is within the relational space of 4–15 people. The relational space that West Highland has created for this to happen is in small groups, which are referred to as Community Groups. This step in the process is located at three o'clock in the process diagram.

Community Groups "allow for a degree of ongoing accountability and fellowship that rarely occurs in the corporate, larger meetings."[58] This is so because the public space lacks the intimacy of a smaller gathering that makes deeper conversations possible. Through the small group, God supernaturally uses community to connect his people, mature his people, and reach the lost.[59]

Service

The third primary ministry identified in the proposed process is service. For some, service is a menial task we perform to run the programs of the church. However, Wilkins challenges us to think of service in a completely different light when he writes,

> These mentoring relationships, both in the Old and New Testaments, were service oriented. The goal of these mentoring relationships was to prepare individuals to serve God's people, either within the nation or within the church. Individuals were equipped for service through these relationships. When we hear the words "discipleship" and "mentoring" we often think of personal growth or some such thing. Growth is important, but the goal of growth is service. These service-oriented mentoring relationships provided leaders who could point the way to Yahweh.[60]

When understood in this way, "the word *serve* (*diakoneō*) should not be understood in the menial sense. It should be taken in the significant sense in which "serving" one another is the essence of discipleship."[61] Service is not an add-on but is a transformative discipline that

[58] Payne, *Discovering Church Planting*, 107.
[59] Stetzer, *Transformational Groups*, 65.
[60] Wilkins, *Following The Master*, 68.
[61] Wilkins, *Following The Master*, 129.

helps the Christian to direct their gaze away from themselves and onto others, and in so doing they begin to imitate Jesus' way of ministry. It is during this stage that church leaders are to "demonstrate service to others, delegate service opportunities, and supervise the progress."[62]

Evangelism

Evangelism, or missions, is the fourth primary ministry of the church. John Piper in his book, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, asserts that "missions exists because worship doesn't."[63] This is why evangelism is placed at the nine o'clock position immediately before worship. When a Christian is used to bring someone to faith in Jesus, they become worshipers of God. In chapter two, it was stated that "when a disciple finished his training, he was expected to reproduce what he'd learned by finding and training his own apprentices."[64] Being released to make more disciples was a sign that the disciple had become proficient at the first four characteristics of becoming like his master:

1. Deciding to follow a teacher.
2. Memorizing the teachers' words.
3. Imitating the teachers' life and character.
4. Learning the teachers' way of ministry.
5. Raising up their own disciples.[65]

Surely to have become somewhat competent at these first four marks indicates a level of spiritual maturity. Now they have been called to make disciples, and the first step of making a disciple is to lead a person to faith in Jesus Christ.

The evangelism step is very versatile. It can happen individually where you work, live, or play, or it can happen in the context of the corporate gathering on Sunday morning. Evangelism can happen in the relational space of community groups, or it can happen while we serve the community together.

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[62] Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 160.
[63] John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad!* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 17.
[64] Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 64.
[65] Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 63–64.

Individual Disciple Making (Alongsider Ministry)

Earlier, Malphurs was quoted as saying that "the Christian's role is personal and individual. The church's role, however, is public and corporate."[66] Malphurs' definition of personal is being used here in the sense that it fulfills the individual and intimate space laid out by Joseph Myers in chapter two. None of the three processes that were analyzed did an adequate job of differentiating between corporate and individual discipleship.

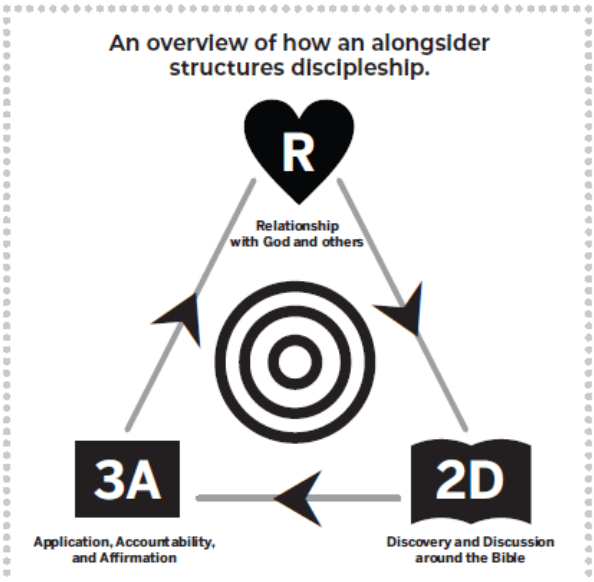
To rectify this, we have placed two small individuals walking together in between each of the other four steps of the process. These figures represent a more mature believer walking alongside a less mature believer (or unbeliever) with the intention of helping them mature in their faith. As Jim Putman puts it, "in the final stage, we expect mature disciples to learn to reproduce other disciples, and we trust the Holy Spirit's impartation in their lives to guide them."[67]

A question that arises from this relationship is what does a disciple maker do in this relationship? A disciple maker must have a methodology for making disciples. A method is "a way of doing something—a plan, a system, an approach."[68] While the disciple-maker would try to move the less mature believer through the five steps of the overarching process, there is a methodology that the disciple-maker would use within the discipleship process.

Bill Mowry, with Navigator Church Ministries, views the disciple-maker as one who is guided by four principles. These principles are illustrated in Figure 9.

[66] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 199.
[67] Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 162.
[68] Payne, *Discovering Church Planting*, 35.

Figure 9: The Alongsider Model



1) **Bull's-eye.** The New Testament's portrait of a disciple becomes the target you aim for in making disciples.
2) **R.** The R stands for relationships. A relationship with God and a relationship with those whom we disciple provide the appropriate context for the disciple-making process.
3) **2D.** There is always an open Bible between a (disciple maker) and the person he or she is discipling. Around this open Bible, discovery and discussion (2D) take place.
4) **3A.** 3A describes application, accountability, and affirmation.[69]

A disciple could be defined as "a Christian who enters into a relationship with another person to intentionally help them trust and follow Jesus."[70]

[69] Mowry, *Ways of the Alongsider*, 14.
[70] Bobby Harrington and Greg Wiens, *Becoming a Disciple Maker: The Pursuit of Level 5 Disciple Making* (Discipleship.org, 2017), 17.

Conclusion

In the introduction of chapter one it was posited that in order to make disciples the church must "design a disciple-maturing process that the Holy Spirit may use in concert with a community of believers to accomplish this (task)."[71] A biblical process will incorporate the five primary ministries of the church: worship, community, service, evangelism, and one-on-one disciple-making, and will reap the benefit of clarity, movement, alignment, and focus. A biblical process should also incorporate the definition of a disciple, and the prominence of the Holy Spirit, Prayer, and the Word of God. It is important that the church be reminded of the ubiquitous nature of these four entities throughout the process. As people move from the larger to the smaller relational environments, they naturally experience a greater sense of belonging, intimacy, and commitment to one another. By placing ourselves in each of the five spaces with a posture of humility and dependence, we trust that the Holy Spirit will bring about spiritual transformation in the lives of God's people.

[71] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 199.

CHAPTER FOUR: THESIS - PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

In chapter one it was asserted that the mission of the church is to make disciples of all nations, and that the "church's role is to design a disciple-maturing process that the Holy Spirit may use in concert with a community of believers to accomplish this (task)."[1] It was further asserted that West Highland church is a PBD church that doesn't consistently produce mature disciples of Jesus Christ. This is evidenced in the fact that the majority of the congregation does not use their spiritual gifts to serve, and are not personally engaged in the Great Commission.

The proposed hypothesis was that a transition (or partial transition) from a PBD church to a PCD church for disciple making would result in West Highland becoming a healthier congregation. To test the hypothesis, it was decided to introduce a strategic vision in the areas of loving relationships, gift-based ministry, and effective structures, as they were identified as sources of significant weakness by internal and external consultation. If the hypothesis was correct, these initiatives would result in a new S-Curve that would create an upsurge in overall church health and numerical growth.

Research Methodology

The author of this thesis-project utilized a mixed method of research and interviews for collecting data from two separate groups of respondent's before-after design. This method was chosen because it "enables investigators to conceptually and analytically integrate qualitative research and qualitative data (e.g., semi-structured interviews, observations, focus groups)."[2]

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[1] Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st – Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 199.

[2] John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Accessed February 15, 2024, https://publichealth.jhu.edu/academics/academic-program-finder/training-grants/mixed-methods-research-training-program-for-the-health-sciences/about-the-program/why-mixed-methods

The first survey was congregational in nature and was conducted by using *The Natural Church Development Church Survey*. This survey is an assessment of a church's health based on eight essential Quality Characteristics of church life. These eight essential Quality Characteristics of church life are illustrated as eight staves of a barrel. According to NCD research "every church in the world will 'leak" the blessings of God from the area (the stave) that is least developed."[3] The purpose of this approach was to ascertain the "perceptions and experiences of those in (the) congregation"[4] with the goal of identifying areas of strength and weakness.

The second survey was constructed by the author for the purpose of assessing the ministry philosophy and strategy of the pastors and staff of the church. The questions were designed to probe perspectives on topics such as process, spiritual transformation, gift-based ministry, and effective structures.

Data Collection

Congregational Survey

Providentially, West Highland conducted a congregational survey through NCD in January of 2018, prior to the planning of this thesis-project (See Appendix A). This was helpful in that it provided a baseline for the research that followed. The NCD survey is cross-sectional so that trends within the congregation can be deduced by using a sample of the church population.

In order to get an accurate cross-section of the congregation, thirty individuals were selected using certain inclusion and exclusion criterion. Gender, age, ministry involvement, and tenure at the church were the standards used for selection. The participants were gathered together in a room and the survey was conducted over a period of approximately one hour.

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[3] Natural Church Development, accessed February 11, 2024, https://ncdchurchsurvey.org/en/process

[4] Flourishing Congregations Institute, accessed February 12, 2024, https://www.flourishingcongregations.org/surveys

On May 30, 2018, the NCD church committee (consisting of four pastors and six staff members) had a follow-up meeting with the NCD coach. During this time, comments, connections, and recommendations were made to the committee (See Appendix B). In April, 2023, a second NCD survey was conducted (See Appendix C). Six of the previous participants had left the church, so replacements were found who closely matched the profile of the previous participants. Once again, the participants were gathered together into a room and the survey was conducted over the period of approximately one hour. On April 26, 2023, the NCD church committee (consisting of the author and one member) had a follow-up meeting with NCD coach, Bill Bickle. During this time, comments, connections, and recommendations were made to the committee (See Appendix D).

Leadership Survey

The second group of respondents that participated in the study were the pastors and staff of the church. The survey for this group was constructed by the author and was designed to assess the ministry philosophy and strategy of the church leadership. (See Appendix E) An assumption of this project is that those who are committed to the PBD would generally be task-oriented instead of process-centered, will not measure spiritual transformation in the people they serve, and will not help volunteers to identify their spiritual gifts and to help them serve in an area that aligns with their giftedness.

The first survey was distributed to six pastors (church care, discipleship, family ministries, outreach, and worship arts, and youth), and three directors of ministry (children's, integration, and prayer counselling) on May 1, 2022. By the time that the second survey was distributed, two of the former pastors, and one of the former ministry directors, had left the church. For the sake of continuity, only the pastors and ministry directors who participated in the first leadership survey were invited to participate in the follow-up survey that was distributed in January, 2024.

Methodology to Test Thesis

The data gathered from the pre-test was instrumental in setting up the methodology to test the thesis. The NCD congregational survey identified loving relationships, gift-based ministry, and effective structures as the primary weaknesses of West Highland Church. In response to the findings, a team was formed consisting of ten staff members to review and make recommendations to the Board of Elders, the Lead Pastor, and to the Ministry Team. (See Appendix G)

Congregational Survey Findings

Loving Community

The NCD survey revealed that West Highland's greatest weakness was a lack of loving relationships. According to NCD "growing churches possess on the average a measurably higher 'love quotient than stagnant or declining (churches)."[5] The "love quotient" (as it is called by NCD) is determined by things such as:

> how much time members spend with one another outside of official church-sponsored events…how generous is the church in doling out compliments? To what extent is the pastor aware of the personal problems of the lay workers in the congregation? How much laughter is there in the church?[6]

A survey conducted by church consultant, Kevin Ford, revealed that the number one indicator of church health is "How church members relate to each other. Unhealthy churches are a collection of people acting individually, while healthy churches relate as a community."[7]

The follow-up team made an interesting correlation between loving relationships and small-group participation. Participants of the survey who belonged to small groups reported that their "relational experiences were strong and were experiencing high degrees of trust and

[5] Christian Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Qualities of Healthy Churches* (St. Charles, IL: Church Smart Resources, 1996), 38.

[6] Schwarz, *Natural Church Development,* 38.

[7] Kevin Ford, *Transforming Church*, (Salt River, AZ: Tyndale Publishers, 2007), 89

intimacy."[8] Participants of the survey who did not belong to a group were not experiencing intimacy, reconciliation, or a sense of being cared for. They reported that conversations within the church building usually "end at hello," and that it wasn't "easy to break into a large church," or to "form friendships." [9] The Lead Pastor during this time echoed these sentiments in a vision document, stating that "many newcomers have struggled to feel connected relationally."[10] The Pastor of Church Care noted that those who were not in small groups required more pastoral care than those who were in small groups. This was due to the fact that those in small groups received much of their "pastoral" care from their fellow group members.

In light of this, the committee concluded that "the need to belong either emotionally or practically is somewhat unmet."[11] This is because it is easier to feel loved in a small group because connections are generally felt in small groups of community. From this, it was hypothesized that loving relationships could be improved if more people were incorporated into healthy small groups. The committee recommended that the church make the creation of more groups a priority.[12]

To this end, the following recommendations were made in May 2018. (See Appendix G)

1) Make small groups more accessible by offering them on Sunday nights. One of the main barriers to members joining a group is busyness. If the church expects members to add something to their busy calendar, then they must remove something from the calendar to free up time. The vast majority of

[8] Dale Laidlaw, *Natural Church Development Findings Report* (Unpublished document, May 2018), 3. See Appendix B.

[9] Laidlaw, *Natural Church Development Findings Report*, 2. See Appendix B.

[10] John Mahaffey, *Vision 2020*. (Unpublished document, 2009), 10. See Appendix F.

[11] Laidlaw, *Natural Church Development Findings Report*, 5. See Appendix B.

[12] In 2018 the small group ministry at West Highland consisted of 27 small groups with roughly 315 people in regular attendance. This represented 39% of the average Sunday attendance.

people are available to participate in a small group on Sunday evening. Offering groups on Sunday was seen as the most strategic way to solve the problem of busyness.

2) List small group as a category of its own instead of one program option among many. By offering small groups as one option among many the church is communicating that small groups are not a priority. In Vision 2020 the Lead Pastor wrote that "West Highland is a church with small groups, not a church of small groups. In other words, small groups are an 'add on', not the heartbeat of our ministry."[13] To rectify this, the Lead Pastor went on to say that there needs to be "an official shift in ministry philosophy and programming to small groups becoming the primary means for assimilation, nurture, fellowship and pastoral care at West Highland."[14]
3) Develop leaders who can lead groups. Leadership training must be offered.[15] The need for leadership development was acknowledged by the Lead Pastor in 2010 when he wrote that "the church can only grow if it has the numbers and quality of leadership necessary to sustain an enlarged ministry."[16]

The implementation of these recommendations began to take place in June of 2021 when a new initiative was introduced by the author to address the lack of loving relationships through the multiplication of small groups. A prototype small group was launched that would serve as an apprentice style training ground to develop small group leaders. Permission was granted by the Lead Pastor to set apart Sunday evening as a time for the prototype to meet

[13] Mahaffey, *Vision 2020,* 12. See Appendix F.
[14] Mahaffey, *Vision 2020*, 17. See Appendix F.
[15] Dale Laidlaw, *Natural Church Development Follow-up* (Unpublished document, May 2018), 1. See Appendix G.
[16] Mahaffey, *Vision 2020*, 19. See Appendix F.

since busyness was identified as an obstacle to small group participation[17]. The prototype consisted of four leaders and their families. The group stayed together for eight months and then multiplied into four groups. In phase two (February of 2022) each of the four leadership couples invited three additional leaders, and their families, to join them. These groups stayed together for ten months and multiplied into seven groups in November of 2022. The seven groups stayed together for eleven months and then multiplied into ten groups.

There was an obstacle encountered during this process. The problem was a disparity between what Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck refer to as actual beliefs and articulated beliefs. "Actual beliefs are what the group collectively believes, not merely says they believe."[18] The Lead Pastor wrote about the importance of small groups in 2010, but in 2021 there was still no progress made. This would suggest that the importance of small groups was an articulated belief and not an actual belief.

When it came time for the second round of groups to be multiplied, the Lead Pastor resisted, because these groups were seen as competition to the adult education program offered on Sunday evenings. In the past, this unwillingness to let go of Sunday evening was considered the primary reason for the small group growth ceiling. This is an example of what Hammer refers to as "the optimization of the part at the expense of the whole,"[19] which is consistent with a program-based ministry philosophy. It is the opinion of the author that this obstacle is rooted in the knowledge-based paradigm of the Enlightenment discussed in chapter one. To the Lead Pastor's credit, he did eventually allow the groups to continue to meet on Sundays to the detriment of the adult education program.

[17]Sunday night was identified as a time when most people were available, and many were already participating in adult education during this time

[18] Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2016), 127.

[19] Michael Hammer, *Beyond Reengineering* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1996), 11.

Gift-Based Ministry

The second major area of weakness identified by the congregational survey was gift-based ministry. "The gift-based approach," writes Christian Schwarz,

> reflects the conviction that God sovereignly determines which Christians should best assume which ministries. The role of church leadership is to help its members identify their gifts and to integrate them into appropriate ministries. When Christians serve in their area of giftedness, they generally function less in their own strength and more in the power of the Holy Spirit…An interesting corollary result of our research was the discovery probably no factor influences the contentedness of Christians more than whether they are utilizing their gifts or not. Our data demonstrated a highly significant relationship between "gift-orientation" …and "joy in living". None of the eight quality characteristics showed nearly as much influence on both personal and church life as "gift-based ministry.[20]

The survey revealed that West Highland church doesn't help its members to identify their gifts so that they can be used effectively. When members were asked if they "know their gifts," the church registered a below-average score of 47[21] (see question 46 in Figure 10). In light of this, it should not come as a surprise that when members were asked if "the tasks (they) perform in (the) church match (their) gifts," the church registered an average score of 50 (see question 9 in Figure 10). If "the role of church leadership is to help its members identify their gifts and to integrate them into appropriate ministries,"[22] as Schwarz contends, then these results are a reflection of failed leadership in this area. This is affirmed in the perception of the members, for when they were asked "if the church regularly offers help for people to discover their gifts," the church registered a below-average score of 42 (see question 37 in Figure 10).

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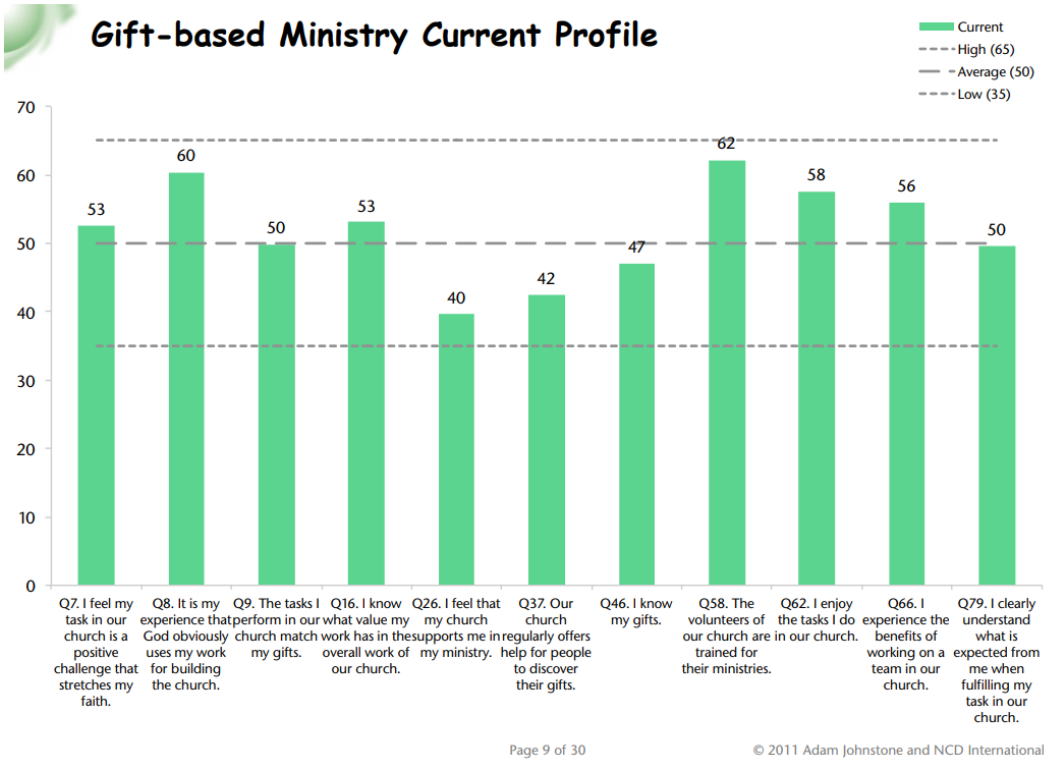
[20] Schwarz, *Natural Church Development,* 26.

[21] The NCD "scale uses index values (similar to IQ tests and other such tools) whereby, in our case, 50 is equivalent to the 50th percentile. One standard deviation is equated to 15 points in our scale. As with all bell curve evaluations, one standard deviation above the average is equivalent to about the 85 percentiles. So a score on our scale of 65 is at the 85th percentile, therefore with anything above 65 being in the top 15% of results." This quote is taken from an e-mail from NCD coach Bill Bickle on Feb., 17, 2024 in response to a question about how they scoring scale worked.

[22] Schwarz, *Natural Church Development,* 26.

The survey seems to indicate that the lack of knowledge surrounding spiritual gifting has a negative impact on the attitudes of many in the congregation. One question probed the issue of spiritual transformation. When asked if they "feel that their task in our church is a positive challenge that stretches my faith," the church registered an average score of 53 (see question 7 in Figure 10). Another question focused on value, by asking if members "know what value my work has in the overall work of our church?" The church registered an average score of 53 (see question 16 in Figure 10). A third question highlighted the issue of expectations by asking members if they "clearly understand what is expected from (them) when fulfilling (their) task(s) in (the) church." The church registered an average score of 50 in response to this question (see question 79 in Figure 10).

Figure 10: NCD Gift Based Ministry Current Profile



The follow-up meeting with the NCD coach corroborated that the lack of leadership in the area of spiritual gifting was having a negative impact on the attitudes of the membership. Many who served did not feel affirmed and appreciated. Some participants commented that

"they self-affirm," but expressed a "need for affirmation from leadership." [23] In addition to this, the NCD committee acknowledged that it is "a struggle to get people to volunteer."[24] In 2022, West Highland averaged 100.6 people who serve on a weekly basis. This represents 13.7% of regular Sunday attendance. This is typical of a PBD church that "rarely involve[s] more than 15% of the total members as working volunteers."[25] It seems logical to conclude that there is a correlation between non-gift-oriented service and volunteer apathy. If people naturally gravitate towards acts of service that they are gifted at and enjoy, then it makes sense that the church encounters service apathy when people are asked to serve in areas that are not aligned with their gifting.

A further irony to the non- gift-oriented approach is that when people do not serve in alignment with their gifts, they "generally operate in their own strength instead of in the strength of the Holy Spirit." [26] The result is less proficiency in the area of service, a diminished sense of contentedness and joy, and eventual ministry fatigue. In fact, "surveys of heavily involved church workers in Program-Based Design structures show they burn out after two or three years (and many) no longer regularly attend church."[27]

The leadership at West Highland has come to realize that gift-based service is part of the transformation process. "People experience God working through them as they minister to others in tangible ways,"[28] and as a result, are changed more into the likeness of Christ. Based on this conviction, the author sought approval to create a strategy to help the church's members to identify their gifts and to integrate them into appropriate ministries. In February of 2022, the Director of Integration launched "Serve Hub" which is a portal on the church

[23] Laidlaw, *Natural Church Development Findings Report*, 4. See Appendix B.
[24] Laidlaw, *Natural Church Development Findings Report*, 5. See Appendix B.
[25] Ralph Neighbour, *Where Do We Go from Here: A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church* (Houston, TX: Touch Publications, 2000), 67.
[26] Schwarz, *Natural Church Development,* 26.
[27] Neighbour, *Where Do We Go from Here*, 67.
[28] Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2011), 95.

website that helps people find opportunities to serve. The problem with this approach was that it did not help members to identify their gifts. If the motivation to serve is inextricably linked to serving in a context that utilizes one's gifts, then any approach we take to serving must incorporate a method of helping members identify their spiritual gifts.

To that end, in May of 2022 a gift-assessment tool that the leadership of West Highland felt comfortable using was identified. The members of West Highland were encouraged to fill out the *Houts Spiritual Gift Assessment* in order to help them identify their spiritual gifts. The survey was only available in hard copy and 135 of 703 members participated. The results were entered into the Church Planning Centre database and categorized by gift. This was helpful, in that we were able to search the database for a particular gift to meet a particular need. An example of this was seen when there was the need for someone with the gift of hospitality to greet people as they came in the doors for Alpha. A member of the church who has the gift of hospitality was contacted and asked to fill this role. Her response was delight, and after the first night, she was thanked for being there, after which she expressed how happy she was to be serving in this way. This is an example of someone being aware of their gift and the benefits of integrating them into appropriate ministries.

In April of 2023, we discovered the company, *Ministry Vitals*, that provides an "all in one volunteer engagement system (that) helps your congregation identify their spiritual gifts, abilities and passions, and personality type,[29] and then matches those unique results with volunteer positions within your church."[30] This software allowed us to centralize the spiritual assessment process which saved a tremendous amount of time, and was much easier for our members to access. The next step was to build a centralized team that would initiate

[29] This software utilizes the S.H.A.P.E. inventory that was created by Rick Warren and Saddleback Church.

[30] Ministry Vitals, Accessed February 14, 2024, https://ministryvitals.com

assessments, follow-up with those assessed, and guide members into opportunities to serve that aligned with their gifting.

Effective Structures

The third major area of weakness identified by the Natural Church Development survey was Effective Structures. There are two structures, or systems, that are relevant to the current assessment. First, a church needs to design a process (structure/system) that cooperates with the Holy Spirit to make mature disciples of Jesus Christ. To ensure the sustainability of this process, a church must also create an organizational, or leadership, structure that will "nurture and support it."[31] Both of these work together like a trellis, providing support for a growing vine or plant. Churches need structures that will support the work of disciple making.[32]

West Highland is a PBD church because it believes that discipleship is predominantly "defined in terms of providing believers with Bible knowledge,"[33] and that programs are the primary means of delivering knowledge. This underlying ministry philosophy gives rise to the current leadership structure. In other words, the current organizational structure of West Highland is an extension, or reflection, of the program-based approach the church has adopted.

The church is organized into four ministry silos: discipleship ministries, support ministries, worship arts ministries, and outreach ministries (Figure 11). Each of these silos employs specialists whose primary job is to create and manage the programs of the church. Program Based churches are organized around a ministry structure that is "designed to develop programs and keep them running."[34]

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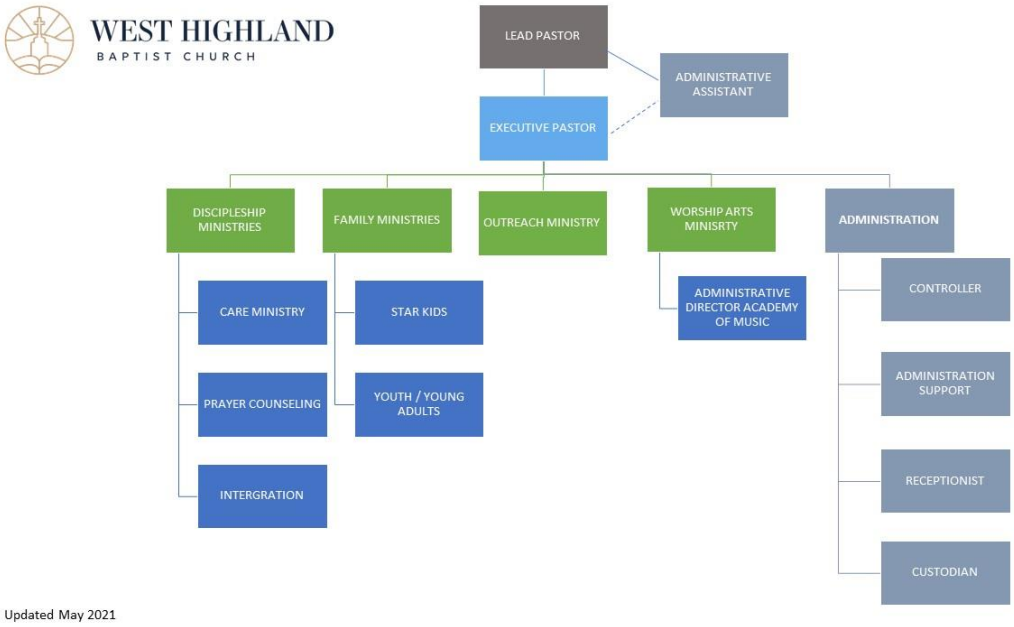
[31] Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI:, Zondervan, 1995), 122.

[32] Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine* (Sydney, Australia: Matthias Media, 2009), 8.

[33] J.D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2009), 111.

[34] Neighbour, *Where Do We Go From Here*, 66.

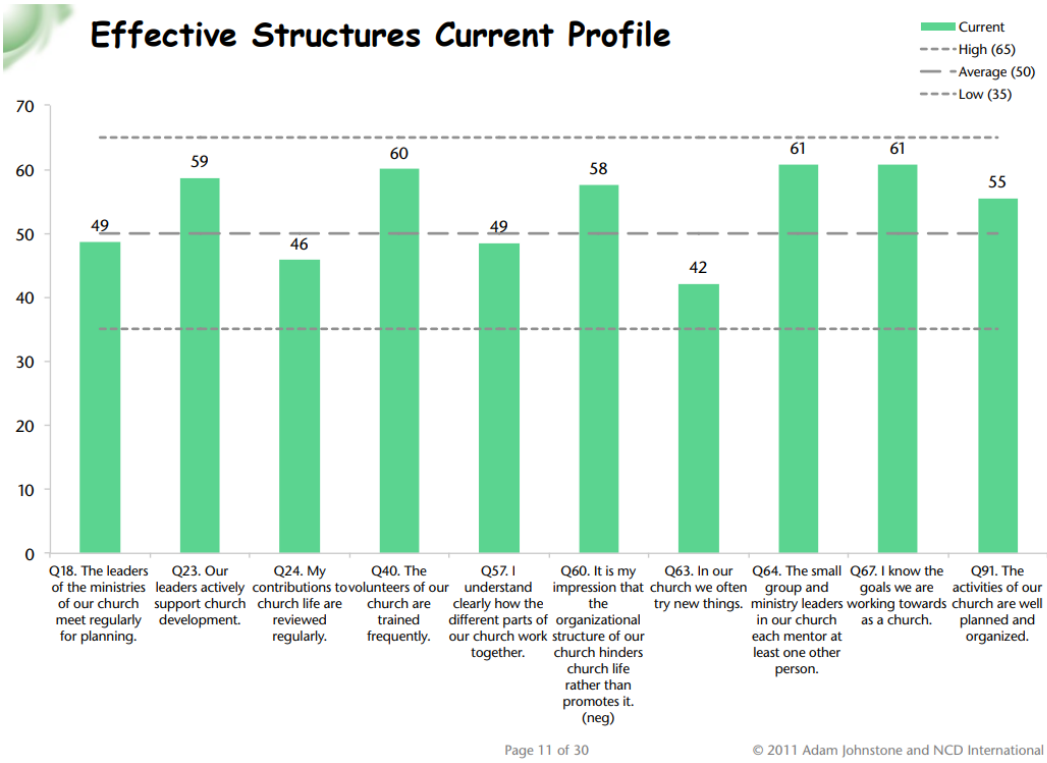
Figure 11: West Highland Church Organizational Chart



The NCD survey revealed that the disciple-making and leadership structure of West Highland does not provide clarity to its members about the strategy to fulfill the mission. When members were asked if they understood "how the different parts of the church worked together," the church registered a below average score of 49 in response to this question (see question 57 in Figure 12). When asked if the "organizational structure of our church hinders church life rather than promotes it," the church registered an average score of 58 (see question 60 in Figure 12). A clear ministry process with a supporting leadership structure is like a blueprint that shows "not only what it to be built but also how it will be built. They show in great detail how everything fits together."[35]The current leadership structure is a failure of leadership to organize the church is a way that enables it to accomplish its mission.

[35] Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church*, 110.

Figure 12: NCD Effective Structures Current Profile



One of the most difficult challenges of effective structures has been trying to help the pastors, staff, and elders of West Highland Church understand what a process is and how it works. Michael Hammer was correct when he stated that "process centering is first and foremost a shift in perspective, an Escherian reversal of foreground and background."[36] This challenge was seen during a presentation to the elders of the church on the need to adopt a strategic disciple-making process. Malphurs' five characteristics of a healthy church (taken from Acts 2:41-47), were presented in sequential order (worship, community, service, evangelism, life-on-life discipleship). The elders believed that we were already doing all of these things. This response revealed two obstacles that needed to be overcome. First, they had not made the distinction between a task and a process. A task is an isolated activity or event, whereas a process is "a related group of tasks that together create a result."[37]

[36] Hammer, *Beyond Reengineering,* 8-9.
[37] Hammer, *Beyond Reengineering*, 5.

Once the distinction between a task and process is made, the next question is 'what tasks (programs) are primary and which are secondary'? Malphurs defines a primary ministry of the church as the ministries

> that are most important in helping your congregation embrace the characteristics of discipleship and become mature. You want everyone to be involved in these activities…they are essentials, not electives. Primary ministries are ordered ministries. They are arranged in some kind of order – usually they reflect how people are assimilated into your church[38]

Malphurs goes on to say that "secondary ministries are those that support and may back up in some way the church's primary activities."[39] While it was true that the church offered all five of the ministries presented through various programs of the church, only one of them (Sunday worship), was considered to be a primary ministry of the church. All of the other ministries were considered optional. This was evidenced in the fact that while the articulated belief was that small groups are primary, only 22% of the pastors, staff, and elders were participating in a small group between 2010 and 2021. Clearly, small groups were considered a secondary ministry.

It has proven to be equally challenging to help the pastors and staff understand what a process is and how it works. Several presentations have been made, in addition to numerous personal conversations. The reading and discussing of the book *Simple Church*, by Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger, by the pastoral and staff team has provided another opportunity to overcome this challenge.

Leadership Survey Findings

Having both a congregational and leadership survey provides the opportunity to compare the answers of the two groups to see if they are on the same page. If they are united

[38] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 200.
[39] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 201

in their response, then this provides a certain degree of confidence that the assessment is accurate. If they are not of the same mind, then further assessment would be needed to discover the reason for the difference.

Gift-Based Ministry

The leadership survey[40] provided an explanation of why the congregation responded the way they did regarding gift-based ministry. Pastors and staff were asked if they help "volunteers to identify their spiritual gifts and to serve in an area that aligns with their giftedness?" Of the 42 ministries surveyed, 38 of the 42 did nothing to help facilitate gift-based ministry. The other 4 ministries have begun (all within 12 months of the survey being completed) to help volunteers identify their spiritual gifts. Two of these ministries used a gift assessment as part of the hiring process, while the other two ministries did a gift assessment but did not use the information they gathered to facilitate gift-based ministry.

Effective Structures

Pastors and staff were asked how they could "improve movement through the process?" Of the 42 ministries surveyed, none of the ministries could articulate a strategic process to make disciples. Four of the ministries identified teaching as the answer to this question. One pastor replied that "our discipleship 101, 201, and 301 classes will help people move through the process." Another response was that we could "continue to speak to these philosophies at (various gatherings)." A third response suggested that the problem could be solved through "more training and support." While teaching is certainly a component of any disciple-making process, these responses reveal a philosophy of disciple-making that is reflective of the knowledge-based paradigm discussed in chapter one.

One staff member viewed a process as "connecting children to God through the disciplines of the faith." This could be achieved by providing children with tools such as a

[40] The leadership survey was sent out to staff of the church in February 2022.

Bible journal reading plan, prayer journal, and by encouraging adult leaders to engage in life-on-life disciple-making with the children. While there should be an individual and life-on-life component in a disciple-making process, no overarching process was articulated.

Two of the pastors viewed the church's definition of a disciple as a process. The inability for the pastors and staff to be able to differentiate between the definition of a disciple (what you are trying to build), and the process (how you build it) has been a significant obstacle to the acceptance and implementation of a new structure. What was encouraging about their responses was that they saw the need to "develop activities that match the three-fold definition of a disciple." This demonstrated that they saw the need to create relational environments around the definition of a disciple that would serve to bring about spiritual transformation.

Transformation

The assertion that West Highland is a Program-Based Church is evidenced in the fact that they have no method to measure qualitative growth. In the self-assessment, each ministry team member was asked: "How does your ministry measure transformation in people?" Of the forty-two ministries the following responses were given:

25 ministries: We don't

6 ministries: The number of conversions

4 ministries: one-on-one accountability

2 ministries: volume of Bible knowledge

2 ministries: People serving

2 ministries: Attendance

1 ministry: Attitudinal Change

Of the forty-two ministries, 59% had no way to measure spiritual transformation in their people. Six of the forty-two ministries measured transformation by the number of

conversions they experienced. Four of the ministries measured spiritual transformation through the number of one-on-one accountability relationships. These accountability groups all took place in the area of church care. This is a positive sign! However, when asked in the self-assessment, “In what ways could this ministry improve in the area of helping people to be transformed by Jesus?”, the response in both instances was to ensure that the one-on-one relationship extended beyond the program. The implication is that when the program ends, so does the relationship, which is a hallmark of a program-based mind-set.

Conclusion

It was hypothesized that a transition (or partial transition) from a PBD to a PCD for disciple making would result in West Highland becoming a healthier church. Research was done utilizing a mixed approach to research using surveys and interviews from two separate groups. The results from the pre-design data helped to identify significant areas of weakness within the church. A methodology was then created to test the hypothesis. If the hypothesis is correct, a new S-Curve should emerge, creating an upsurge in overall church health and numerical growth.

CHAPTER 5: OUTCOMES AND OBSERVATIONS

This chapter will consider the outcomes of the project design and implementation by interpreting the data from both pre- and post-assessments. It will take into account the measurements from the changes that have occurred since the first assessment was completed in the areas of loving relationships, gift-oriented service, and effective structures.

Loving Relationships

In chapter four it was noted that in 2018, the NCD data revealed a correlation between loving relationships and small group participation. Participants of the survey who belonged to small groups reported higher degrees of trust and intimacy than those who did not belong to a small group. From this correlation the hypothesis was made that loving relationships could be improved if more people were incorporated into healthy small groups.

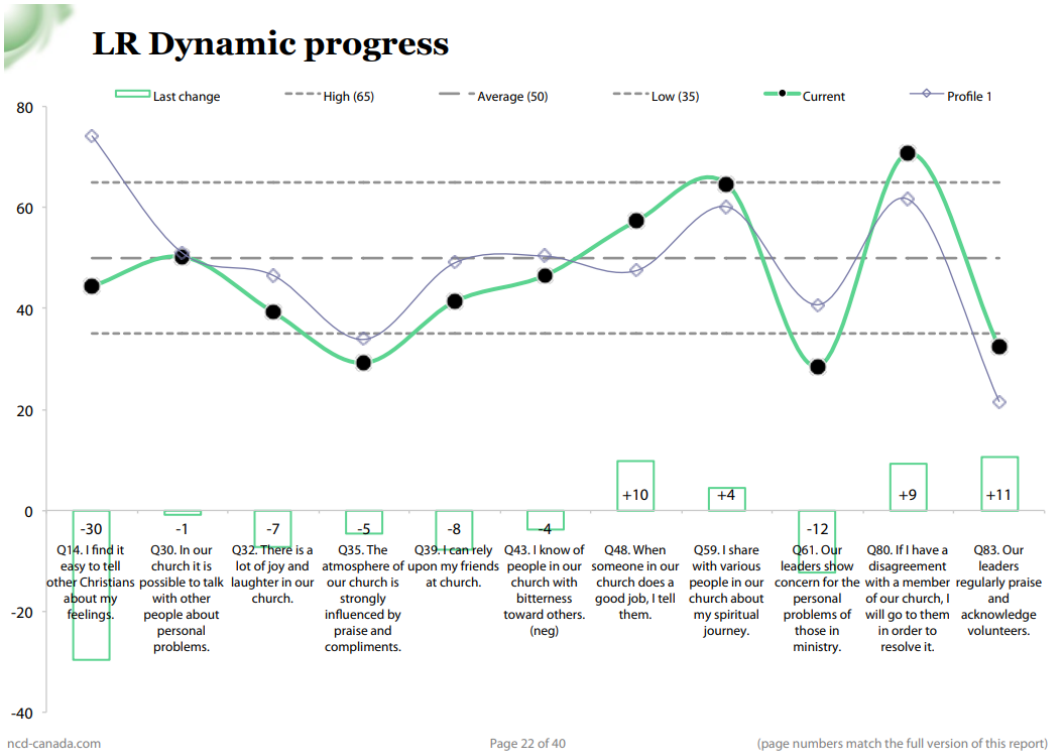
To test this hypothesis, an initiative was launched in April 2021 to create a new small group prototype that could be multiplied to increase small group participation. In twenty-eight months, the church was able to grow the number of small groups from 27 with 315 in attendance, to 40 with 494 in attendance. This represents a 19% increase in small group participation when measured against the average Sunday morning attendance numbers.

Despite this initiative, the 2023 NCD survey revealed that Loving Relationships remained unchanged (see Figure 13). NCD coach, Bill Bickle, expressed surprise that loving relationships didn't go up.[1] However, he pointed out that it did not go down (with an overall score of 55), and that West Highland is still above average in general health. He went on to observe that in light of all that has happened over the past several years with regards to the COVID 19 pandemic and the leadership transition at the church, this is actually quite

[1] Notes from the follow up interview with NCD coach, Bill Bickle, were collected by Chris Kovac, 2023 *Natural Church Development Findings Report* (Unpublished document, April 26, 2023), 1. See Appendix D.

significant.[2] The fact that loving relationships didn't decline in the face of significant challenges suggests that the work done in small groups has laid a foundation to support spiritual health.

Figure 13: Loving Relationships Report from NCD. Comparison of 2018 to 2023



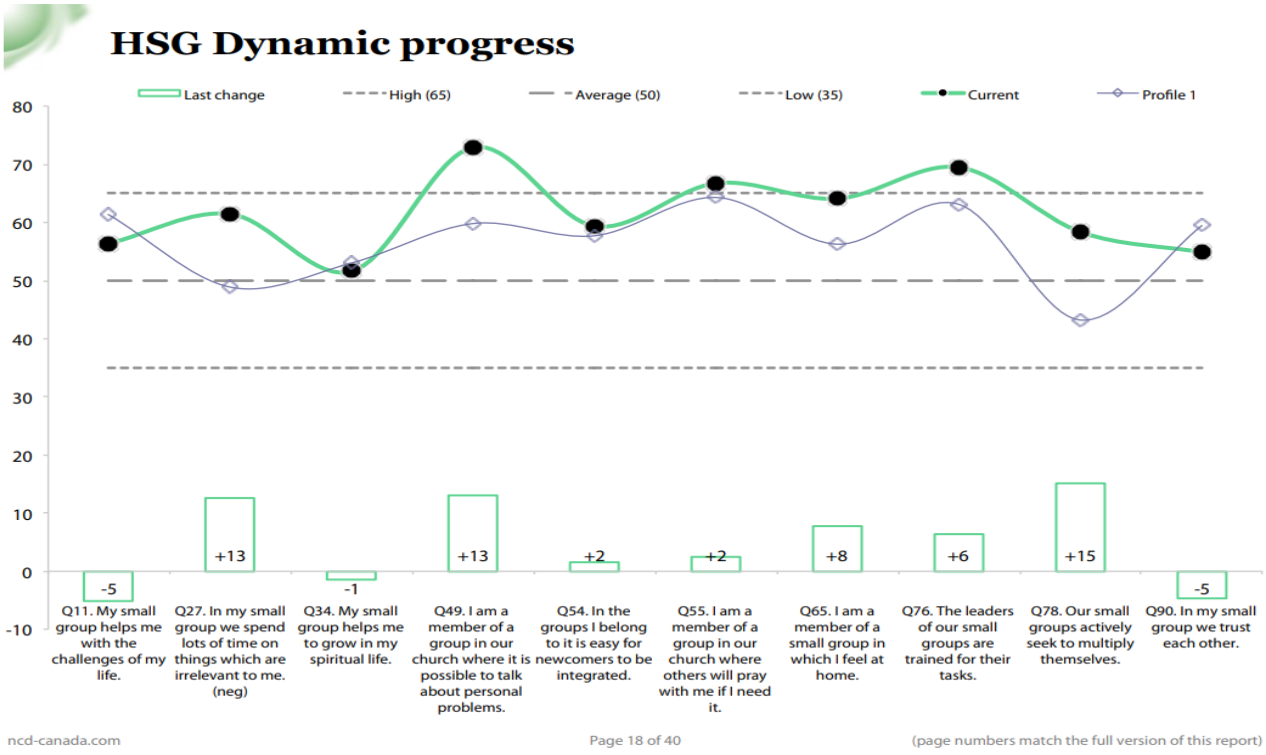
Bill Bickle did affirm the initial hypothesis by suggesting that the link between small groups and loving relationships was a realistic one, but it may have not gone far enough.[3] In other words, the church may have to continue to grow the number of groups in order to improve loving relationships, or it could be that the impact of increased group participation has not yet been fully realized by the congregation.

A positive result from the small group initiative was the overall health of the small group ministry. In 2018, the NCD survey gave West Highlands' small group ministry a score of 59, and in 2023 it was given a score of 66.[4] (Figure 14). Commenting on this positive

[2] Kovac, 2023 *Natural Church Development Findings Report Round 2, 1.* See Appendix D.
[3] Kovac, 2023 *Natural Church Development Findings Report Round 2, 1.* See Appendix D.
[4] According to NCD scoring system, any score above 65 is in the top 15% in the country.

growth, NCD coach Bill Bickle said that "This is amazing! You are in the top 15% of the country. This is essential in a large church."[5] According to Bickle, "(our) people are telling (us) that (our) small groups are holistic…they take care of the heart, head, and hands of (our) people."[6] This is a very positive development, and it also provides hope that a continued emphasis on multiplying holistic small groups will eventually have a positive impact upon loving relationships.

Figure 14: Holistic Small Group Report from NCD. Comparison of 2018 to 2023

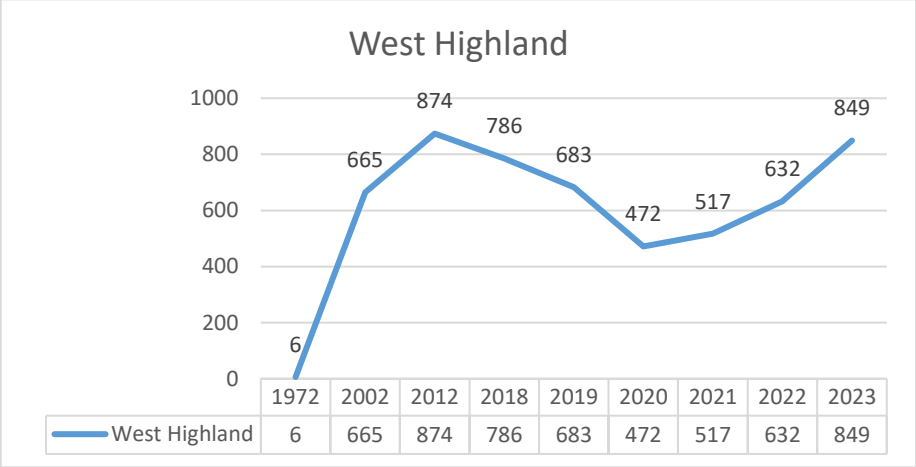


Another benefit of the small group initiative has been seen in the retention of people. In 2019, the average Sunday attendance at West Highland was 683 people. In June of 2023, Gallup published a poll showing that the average American church attendance is 4% lower

[5] Kovac, 2023 *Natural Church Development Findings Report, 1.* See Appendix D.
[6] Kovac, 2023 *Natural Church Development Findings Report, 1.* See Appendix D.

than pre-pandemic levels.[7] If West Highland followed this trend (and it seems as though it should have in light of COVID, being a big church, and significant leadership change) then the church's average Sunday attendance in 2023 should have dropped to 656. However, in spite of these challenges, West Highland has experienced revitalization, which is evidenced in a new "S-Curve" (see Figure 15).

FIgure 15: A New S-Curve Resulting in Revitalization at West Highland Church



While there may be some who would claim that this growth can only be explained by a miraculous act of God, this would seem to be an example of what John Wesley referred to as "expecting the ends without the means."[8] If, as was stated in chapter two, community plays a vital role in God's redemptive plan, then it should not come as a surprise that a 19% increase in small group participation resulted in a 20% growth on Sunday morning. In fact, research has confirmed that "new Christians who immediately become active in a small group are five times more likely to remain in the church five years later than those who were active in worship services alone."[9] The fact that the work done in small groups was the only new initiative during this time, and that the two numbers mirror one another so closely,

[7] Jeffrey Jones, "US Church Attendance Still Lower than Pre Pandemic," *Gallup*, June 26, 2023, Accessed March 9, 2024, https://news.gallup.com/poll/507692/church-attendance-lower-pre-pandemic.aspx

[8] Michael Haykin, "Evangelicalism, and the Enlightenment" *in The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities* edited by Michael Haykin and Kenneth Stewart (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2008), 39

[9] Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2011), 157.

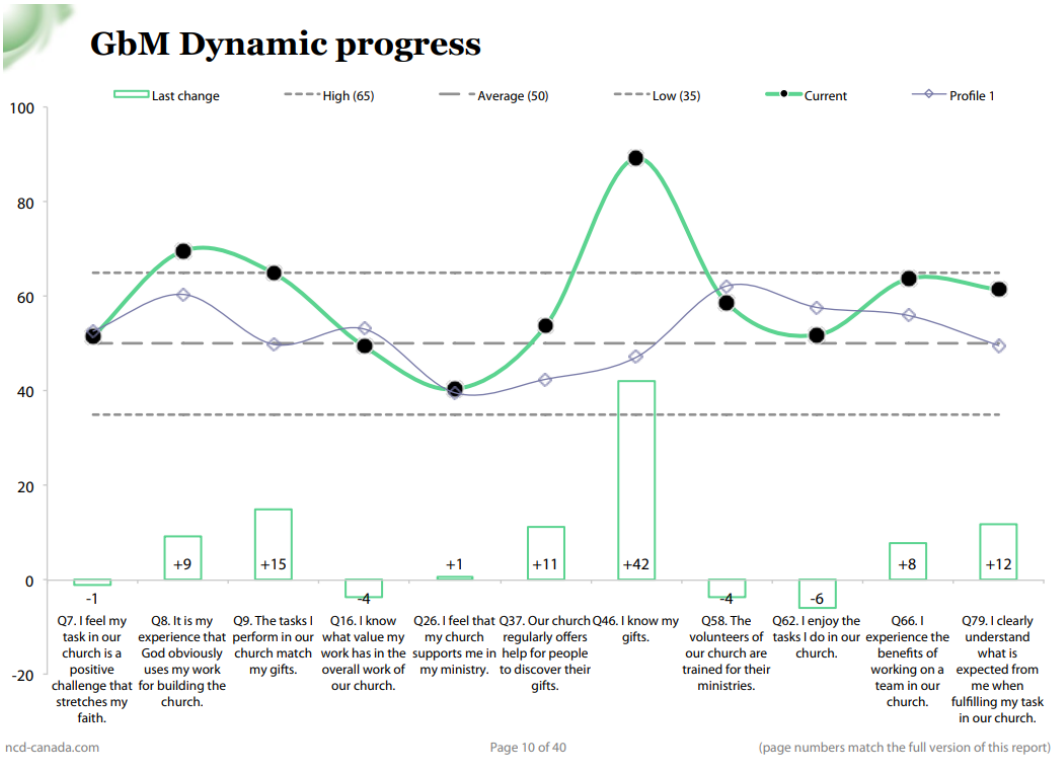
indicates that the work done in small groups is one of the causes, if not the major cause, of the revitalization of Sunday attendance.

Gift Based Ministry

The second major area of weakness identified by the 2018 NCD survey was gift-based ministry. Gift-based ministry asserts that God gives believers in Jesus Christ spiritual gifts so that they can serve Him, the church, and the world. "When Christians serve in their area of giftedness, they generally function less in their own strength and more in the power of the Holy Spirit," and experience a greater sense of contentedness and joy in living.[10]

The first NCD survey revealed that many in the church could not identify their spiritual gifts (question 46, Figure 16), that many did not feel that the tasks they performed matched their gifting (question 9, Figure 16), and that the church did not offer enough help for people to discover their gifts (question 37, Figure 16).

Figure 16: Gift-based Ministry Report from NCD. Comparison of 2018 to 2023



[10] Christian Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Qualities of Healthy Churches* (St. Charles, IL: Church Smart Resources, 1996), 26.

Since the implementation of the centralized service team, the church has experienced measurable growth in the area of gift-based ministry. Overall, gift-based ministry moved from an NCD score of 52 in 2018 to a score of 62 in 2023. The survey revealed that from 2018 to 2023 those who could identify their gifts increased 42 points (question 46, Figure 16). Those who felt that the tasks they performed matched their gifting increased 15 points (question 9, Figure 16), and the perception that the church offers help for people to discover their gifts increased 11 points (question 37, Figure 16). West Highland is only 3 points away from moving into the top 15% of the country in the area of gift-based ministry.

Another area where positive growth can be measured is in the net numbers of people serving. In January of 2023 West Highland averaged 100.6 people serving on a weekly basis. This represented 13.7% of West Highland's average Sunday attendance. In January of 2024 West Highland has 185 people serving on a weekly basis, which represents 21.7% of the Sunday attendance. West Highland has increased the number of people serving by 8% in twelve months.

There is also anecdotal evidence of growth in the area of gift-based service. One example occurred when recruiting someone to serve as a greeter for the Alpha course. It was decided that the greeter should have the gift of hospitality (hospitality is the love of strangers) since they would be greeting people whom they have never met. The centralized database for spiritual gifts revealed numerous individuals with the gift of hospitality. The first person that was called enthusiastically responded to the opportunity to serve in this capacity. When she arrived on opening night, she was informed that she had been invited to serve in this way because her primary gift aligned with the service opportunity. The woman's response was positive and she observed that she is often asked to serve in the nursery, and she doesn't feel that this is in alignment with her gifting. While she often says yes to the nursery, because

there is a need, she finds that it depletes her energy and causes her to be apprehensive about going to church on those days.

An interview with this woman at the end of the Alpha course revealed that serving in a way that aligns with her gifting resulted in greater contentment and joy in her life. She also noted that serving in this area was transformative, in that it provided greater insight into how God has gifted her. She also mentioned that it led to greater engagement in the mission of Jesus because of the evangelistic nature of the Alpha program[11]. These comments confirm that serving is a transformational opportunity that leads to greater degrees of joy, contentment, commitment, and maturity.

Follow-up surveys with the staff in February of 2024 indicated that there is a consensus among the staff that it is important to help volunteers to identify their spiritual gifts and to serve in an area that aligns with their giftedness. When asked if they offer to help members identify their gifts, staff referred to the centralized process that is now in place.

Effective Structures

The third major area of weakness identified by the Natural Church Development survey was Effective Structures. In 2018 NCD gave Effective Structures a score of 55. In 2023 this score dropped to a score of 50 points. Commenting on the drop in Effective Structures, NCD coach Bill Bickle pointed out that there is a sense that the current structures give the "impression that the leaders aren't with us."[12] An example of this is seen in the 15 point drop in question 23 (Figure 17) when members were asked if "leaders actively support church development." Another example of this perception is the 22 point drop in question 24 (Figure 5.5), which asks if "contributions to church life are reviewed regularly." These responses are likely the consequence of the PBD structure that is "designed to develop

[11]Faye Leytham. Interviewed by Chris Kovac. West Highland Church, January 21, 2024.
[12] Kovac, 2023 *Natural Church Development Findings Report, 1.*

programs and keep them running."[13] Pastors who work for PBD churches see their primary responsibility as producing and managing efficient programs. Therefore, they don't have time to support, encourage, and empower lay leaders. Volunteers are treated (inadvertently) as a means to an end (those who help in the administration of programs) instead of an end in themselves (people who need to be discipled toward maturity). This leaves volunteers feeling as though staff are not invested in them.

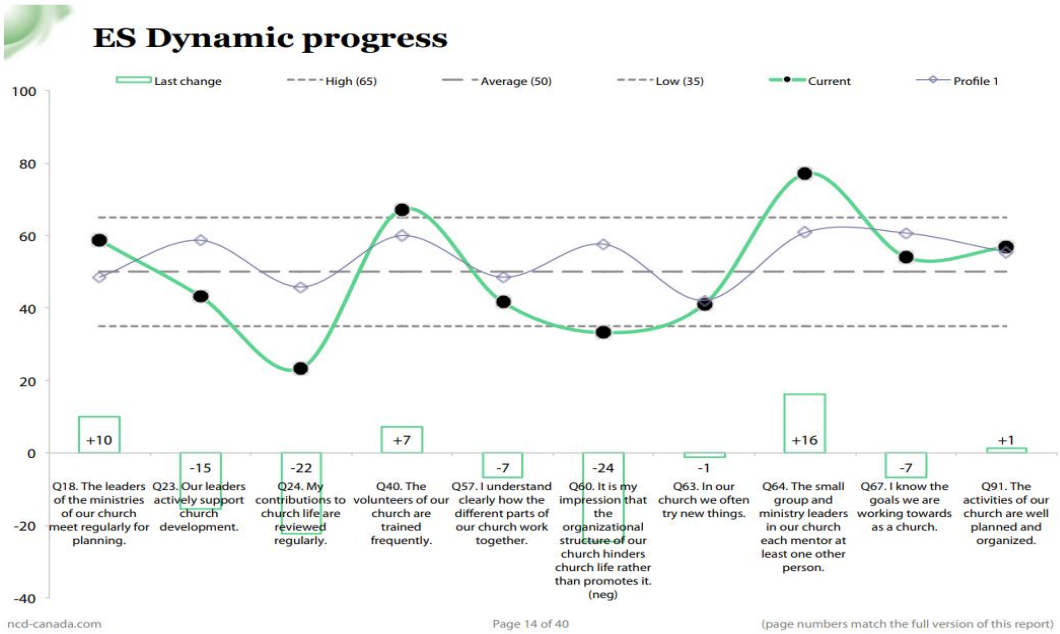
The current structure also lacks clarity about how it serves to move the mission forward. When members were asked if they "understand clearly how the different parts of the church work together," there was a 7 point drop (question 57, Figure 17). There is also a great deal of skepticism about the effectiveness of the current organizational structure. There was a 24 point drop in question 60 (Figure 17) where the majority of members expressed that it was their "impression that the organizational structure of the church hinders church life rather than promotes it." The current structure of West Highland has created ministry siloes that inhibit the clarity, movement, alignment, and focus outlined by Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger in their book *Simple Church*.

The proposed solution to this problem is the implementation of a disciple making process that is "designed to partner with God to move people through the stages of spiritual growth."[14] A process would provide clarity to both the leaders and members regarding the pathway toward spiritual maturity. It would help people understand how the different parts of the church work together so that the congregation can have confidence that the organizational structure of the church promotes, rather than hinders, spiritual life.

[13] Ralph Neighbour, *Where Do We Go From Here: A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church* (Houston, TX: Touch Publications, 2000), 66.

[14] Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church*, 62.

Figure 17: Effective Structures Report from NCD. Comparison of 2018 to 2023



The development of small groups and gift-oriented service was a strategic first step in the implementation of a disciple-making process. By increasing small group capacity, and re-focusing service on gift-orientation, the church was able to create relational environments that were conducive to spiritual transformation and care. If these areas were not developed, the process would lack the capacity and transformative ability to produce disciples who are maturing in their faith and character. However, without an organizational structure to support and nurture the process, the gravitational pull of the culture will naturally lead back to a program-based paradigm that caters to the individualistic consumer of knowledge outlined in the opening chapter.

The greatest challenge of the implementation of the thesis-project has been trying to shift the perspective of the pastors, staff, and elders from a program based to a process centered mindset. In the early stages of this endeavor (September 21, 2022), the author introduced a tool at the weekly ministry team meeting that was designed to measure movement through a proposed process. Even though the church had not adopted a process at this time, the goal was to help the ministry team to adopt a "new cognitive style, an ability to

look horizontally across the whole organization, as if from the outside, rather than from the top down."[15] The first step of this change was to begin to view our attendance numbers horizontally instead of vertically (see Table 2). In other words, "to measure attendance at each level/stage in (the) process,"[16] instead of limiting our discussion of attendance figures to Sunday morning. The introduction of this tool generated discussion about program and process, and helped to incrementally shift the ministry team's understanding of process centering.

Table 2: Attendance Reporting

Those in Directory	Sunday Attendance	Community Group Attendance	People Serving	People being discipled	Disciple Makers	Multipliers
1318	641	144	84	84	28	8
Last Week						
1318	696	14	49	84	28	8

On March 7 of 2023, the author made a presentation to the elders entitled "From Task to Process." The purpose of the presentation was to explain the difference between a PBD and PCD church, and to introduce a process that could replace the PBD model. It was noted in chapter four that the presentation was met with confusion regarding the difference between a task and a process, as well as an inability to distinguish between primary and secondary ministries. From this meeting it was concluded that it would be a better investment of time trying to influence the paradigm of the staff team.

During the summer of 2023, the author and another staff member independently recommended to the interim leader that the staff read and discuss the book *Simple Church*, by

[15] Michael Hammer, *Beyond Reengineering*, (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1996), 14.
[16] Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church*, 123.

Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger, as it would help staff in their understanding of process centering. The staff discussed one chapter a week during staff meetings beginning Tuesday October 24, 2023, and ending Tuesday February 20, 2024. The reading and discussion of this material, in conjunction with several in meeting presentations and personal discussions between the author and the staff, resulted in significant progress in understanding process centering. Follow-up surveys of the staff in February of 2024 indicated that there was a consensus among the staff that a disciple-making process is necessary and that the church is close to officially adopting one.

Future Studies

The NCD survey has proven to be a very useful tool in identifying present strengths and weaknesses. It has allowed the church to celebrate strengths and to address weaknesses by creating a strategic action plan with the help of the NCD coach. NCD recommends that churches repeat the survey annually in order to keep the momentum moving forward. Bill Bickle compares the NCD to an annual check-up at the doctor's office.

> Like a doctor it can show things that are starting to develop so that you can be pro-active instead of re-active. It's an early warning system. Things that we are doing now could take years to show up fully. You can pick up on signs of un-health before they become big problems.[17]

As a church, West Highland has decided to repeat the survey every eighteen months. Twelve months does not seem like enough time to implement the changes that need to be made. However, the church realizes that five years (the time difference between the 2018 and 2023 survey done by the church) is too infrequent. This practice should be maintained every eighteen months in order to measure progress and to identify emerging weaknesses.

[17] Kovac, 2023 *Natural Church Development Findings Report, 1.* See Appendix D.

Personal Reflection

The PBD ministry philosophy did not emerge from a vacuum. Rather, it came about as the result of centuries of thought and influence. To transition from the PBD to the PCD is really an exercise in changing culture and has proven to be a very challenging endeavor. This is the case because changing the culture for a PBD to a PCD requires a significant shift in perspective and re-shapes everything we do. Structures, systems, personnel, attitudes, measurement systems, management styles, and the like[18] are radically altered in such a change.

West Highland is a fifty-year-old church, and as such, has a deeply entrenched culture. To make a shift of this magnitude required extreme patience because it required several years to accomplish. The author at times became frustrated and impatient with the slowness at which the implementation of the process was taking place. It was important to remember that other team members, as well as the congregation, needed time to process and digest the thinking behind a major philosophical change.

Another insight has to do with the difficulty of trying to implement change from the "second chair" position. In a hierarchal leadership model, the senior pastor holds ultimate authority. If he does not understand, or is unwilling to make the necessary changes, then those in the "second chair" must either acquiesce or be willing to challenge the leader. This is a difficult choice when the health of the church is at stake. However, if one chooses to challenge leadership, then they must be forewarned that such a move, if not done properly, could involve a significant cost that may ultimately damage the quality of relationship between the person in the "second chair" and the senior pastor. Challenging the leader should be done in a way that is marked by love, patience, and respect.

[18] Michael Hammer, *Beyond Reengineering*, 8.

Conclusion

The hypothesis in chapter one was that as a result of a transition (or partial transition) from a PBD to a PCD for disciple making, West Highland should be a healthier church. The results of the assessments indicate that this expectation was realized in part. From an overall perspective, there was no change in West Highland's health. In both NCD surveys (2018 and 2023) West Highland scored a 55 for its general health. A score of 55 places West Highland as being moderately above average in health when compared to other Canadian churches. While there was not an increase in the overall number, the fact that West Highland was able to maintain its health despite a number of internal (leadership changes, large church), and external (COVID-19) challenges, seems to indicate that healthy growth did occur and prevented the church from further decline.

The work that was done in the area of small groups resulted in the revitalization of the church as evidenced by a new "S-Curve." If this work had not been done, it is reasonable to conclude that West Highland's average attendance in 2023 would have been 4% lower than pre-pandemic levels (656 instead of the current 849). The results also indicate that the current groups are more holistic than their predecessors.

The re-orienting of the focus of serving to gift-oriented service resulted in an 8% increase in the number of people serving. There is also a greater degree of alignment between the giftedness of those who serve and the area of service. If Christian Schwarz's research is accurate, then this should result in a greater sense of joy and contentment in the lives of those who serve, and in time will have a positive impact on loving relationships and the overall health of the church.

The focus on small groups and gift-based service was a strategic decision to focus on two areas of weakness that are two of the five steps of the proposed process. The work done

in these areas was necessary to ensure greater numerical capacity as well as relational environments that are transformational in nature.

The process has been discussed at length with the ministry team over the past three years. Other members of the staff team have had the opportunity to provide input into the current version of the process, as well as the time to think through the implications of transitioning from a PBD to a PCD for making disciples. Without an official process, the church will most likely revert back to the old program-based mindset. However, it seems as though the adoption of a process is imminent. This is an encouraging development, as it will provide support for the work that has already been done and will pave the way for greater growth in the future.

APPENDIX A

(This appendix has been maintained in its original landscape format)

NCD REPORT 2018

West Highland Fellowship Baptist Church

January-2018

Pastor for 10 years: John Mahaffey

Profile	Date	Minimum Factor	Maximum Factor	Min - Max Difference	Average
0	Jan-18	47.0 Loving relationships	63.3 Need-oriented evangelism	16.3	56.9

Welcome!

Welcome to your first (or next) NCD cycle. It is a process for transforming the spiritual journey of your church, helping you learn to partner with God in increasingly fruitful ways.

This NCD Status Guide is one of four guides received by your church. These guides present your NCD results from different perspectives. Each guide is based on the same information but with a different emphasis in each instance. You could think of it as similar to sitting down to read a passage from the Bible in a paraphrased, an amplified and a life-application version (see the overviews below).

NCD is a process, so your pastor has been encouraged NOT to discuss all the guides in one sitting. Instead, they are asked to allow each guide discussion and the action that follows to nurture, within themselves and the leadership, higher levels of observation, understanding and practical action - aspects of growth that completely depend on each other.

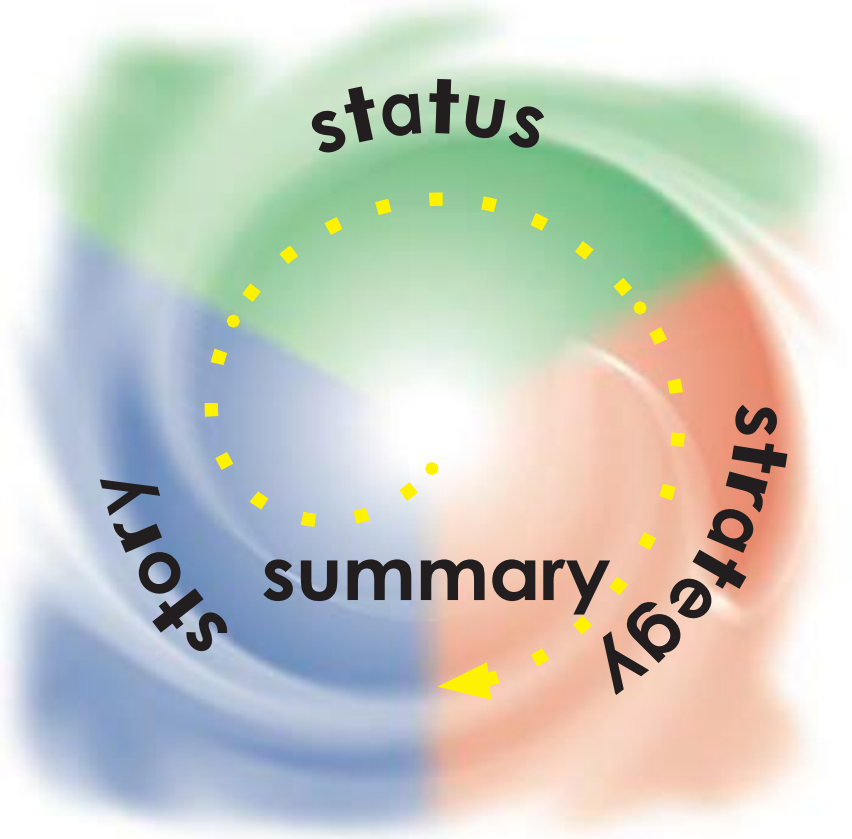
On the following page is a map that will give you an overview of the process. Specific instructions follow on page 4.

Please embrace the celebration points and challenges ahead and may God richly bless you on this journey of partnership with him.

NCD *Summary* guide

Aim: presents a non-detailed overview of the health and influence of your church.

Will appeal to: all who would like a general picture of your church's strengths and challenges.



NCD *Status* guide

Aim: presents the detailed data from your surveys as well as progress information if this is a repeat survey.

Will appeal to: analytical people who like to understand the background and come to their own conclusions.

NCD *Story* guide

Aim: presents your results as everyday themes of church life.

Will appeal to: more relational people who view and talk about church life through their and other's real life experiences and stories.

NCD *Strategy* guide

Aim: presents growth projections as well as principles for helping your whole church act on your results.

Will appeal to: task-oriented future-focused people who are about taking action and staying on track.

NCD Process Map

1. A copy of the Summary Guide is given to each key leader for them to read. They are invited to a meeting to discuss the Summary Guide and then work through the Story Guide together.

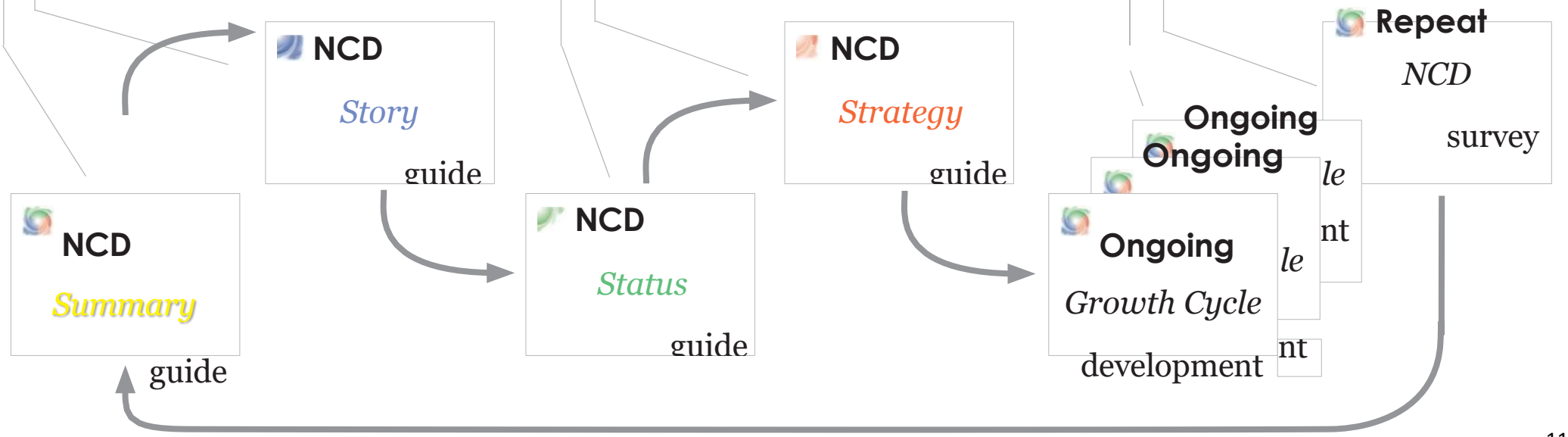
2. At this initial meeting, the Summary and Story guides will be discussed. Practical action steps will begin soon after and be refined in subsequent meetings. Copies of the Story Guide and the remaining guides may be distributed at this time in accordance with the gifts of different leaders.

3. About a month after your initial gathering, another meeting will be held to discuss the Status Guide and review the simple personal action steps taken so far. Refined simple action steps will continue after this meeting.

4. About a month after your previous gathering, another meeting will be held to discuss the Strategy Guide and again review progress on the simple personal action steps taken so far. Refined personal action steps and collective initiatives will follow this meeting.

5. You will continue to meet regularly to discuss and refine progress on your personal Growth Cycles and any church-wide NCD initiatives (explained in the guides). These gatherings need not take much time but must be held consistently.

6. You will repeat the NCD Survey after about one year to track your progress, celebrate any growth, and bring a greater focus to any longer term cultural sticking points.



Status Guide Instructions

By way of preparation for your ongoing NCD result discussions, **please work through the explanations and charts on the following pages**. Ask yourself the associated questions while imagining the responses others may have to the various topics. While your first pass through the guide is to help you establish a personal response to the results, the following important points will help you relate your findings to the stories and strategies put forward by others along the way.

The importance of your work with this guide

In the same way as the church depends on different parts of the body working together, the NCD process works best when unique, complementary contributions are encouraged. Your role in working with or presenting this guide is to **bring objectivity to the discussions as well as background information that will help to move the group forward**.

For many people, soberly seeing their church in comparison to the wider Christian Church can be quite a challenge. After all, given enough time, everything in even a very *unhealthy* church can appear normal! The normalisation of your church's results against national benchmarks, as presented in this guide, will help you establish this objectivity.

Pragmatic analysis

Given the volume of information, **you will need to be selective in using the data in this guide** based upon what will be most helpful to your process right now. Look for the insights that will both sharpen the perceptions of the group and move them through to simple, refined, practical action.

Even if you feel that objectivity and detail are sometimes being compromised by this apparent "pragmatism", keep in mind that NCD is a process based on continuous, relatively short, cycles of development. That means it will never be too long before your important deeper insights are finally recognised by others, or that perhaps others will help you to make new discoveries that further deepen everyone's understanding. **At all times, try to bring a new level of clarity to discussions and actively respond to the very real feelings and practical concerns of others**.

If facilitating group discussion...

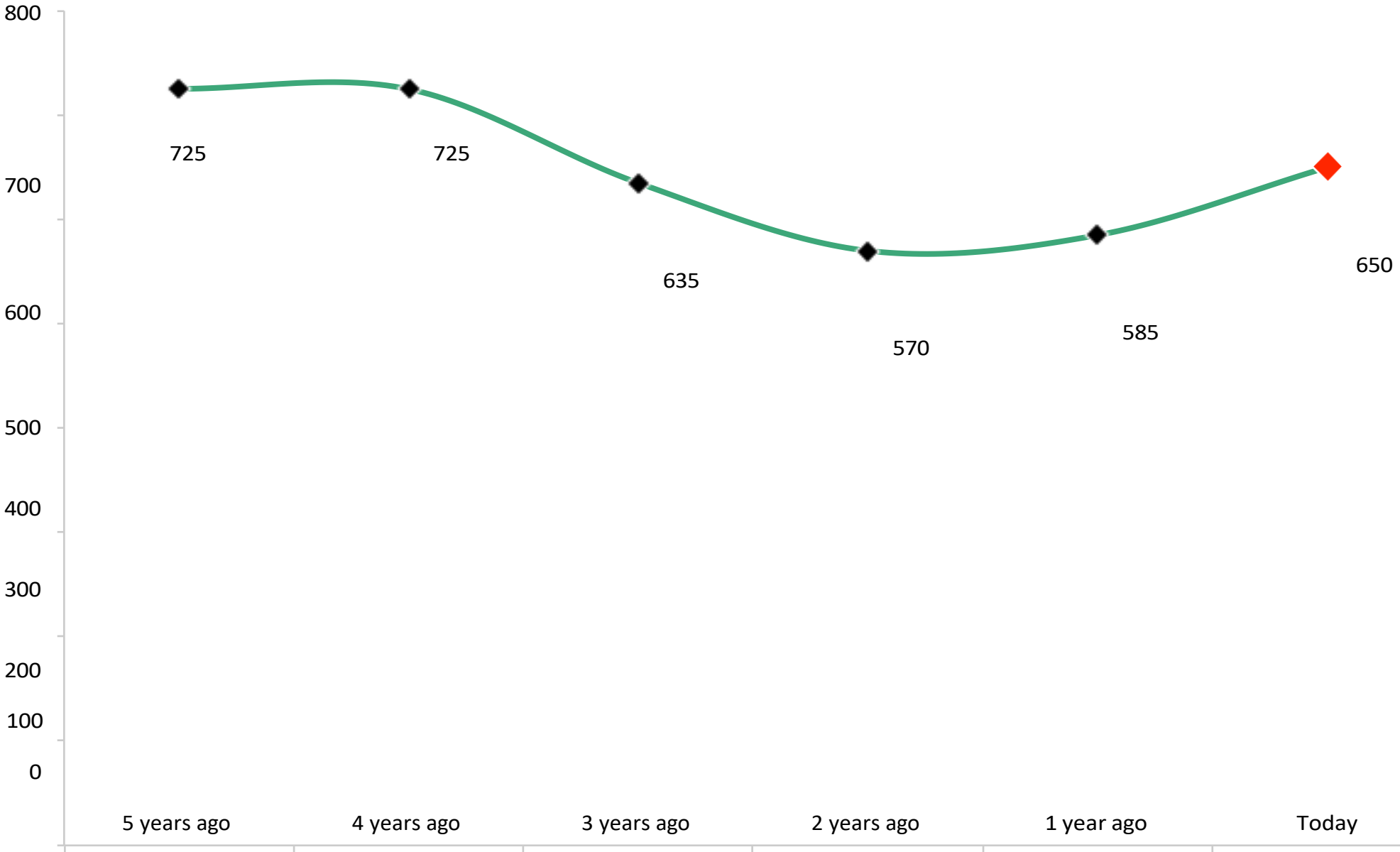
It may be that your pastor has asked you to provide insights from this NCD Status Guide. If so, when you gather to discuss the results, (in consultation with your pastor) **you will need to have arranged for the relevant pages to be available to the rest of the group** either on paper or on a screen. The PDF file can simply be displayed in full screen mode on most computers connected to a projector.

Priority discussion points

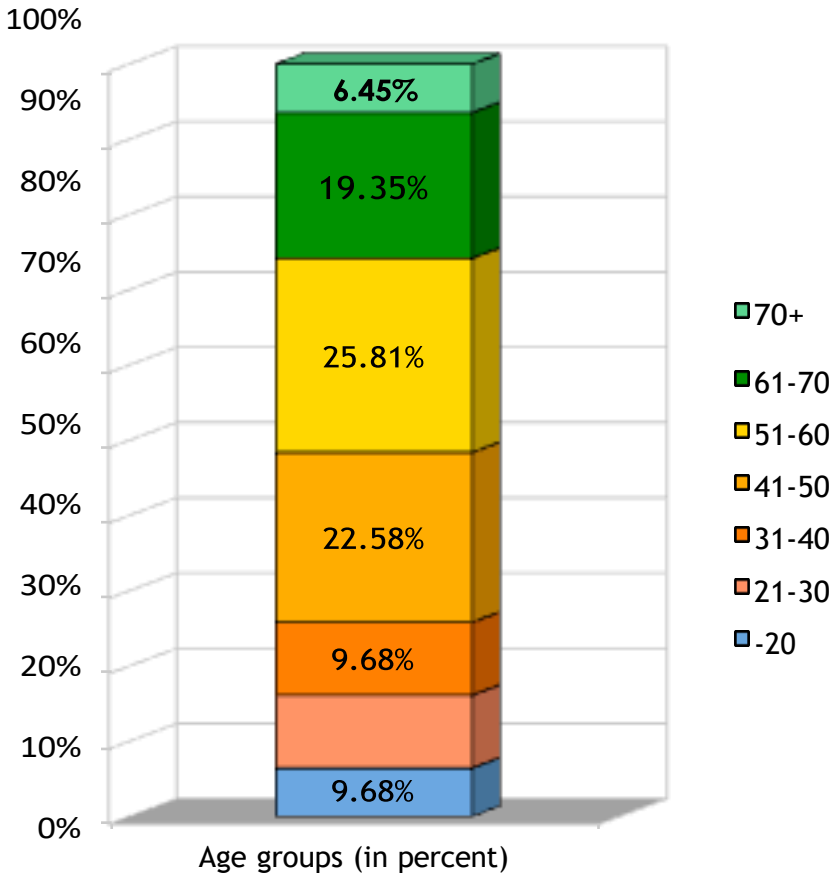
You will have many more opportunities very soon to share additional thoughts in subsequent cycles of the process. But for now, (in addition to the two mandatory topics) **tick two or three topics below that you believe will help move the group to the next level of understanding about your results and then present those points**. For your preparation, you can start reading through the charts from the next page, or systematically work through the explanations for the topics below.

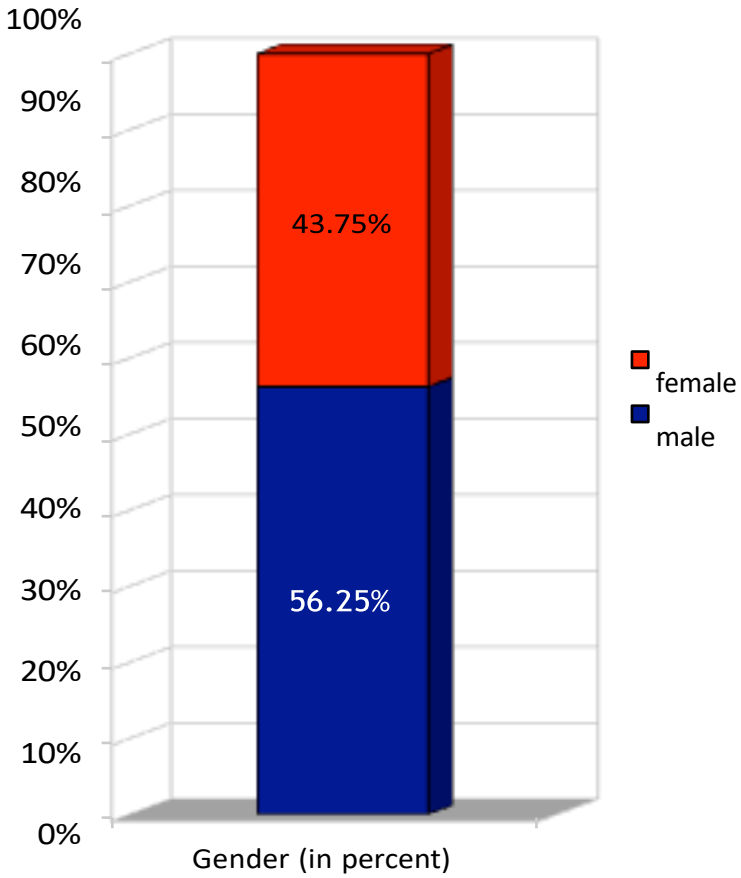
- ☐ The background to your results (pages 19-20)
- ☐ Age and gender demographics (page 21)
- ☐ Sustainability (page 22)
- ☐ Minimum factor detail (page 23)
- ☐ Lowest and highest 10 questions (page 24)
- ☐ Current capacity (page 25)
- ☑ Understanding the facts beyond reasonable doubt (page 26)
- ☑ Cycling together (page 26)

Adult Attendance Growth

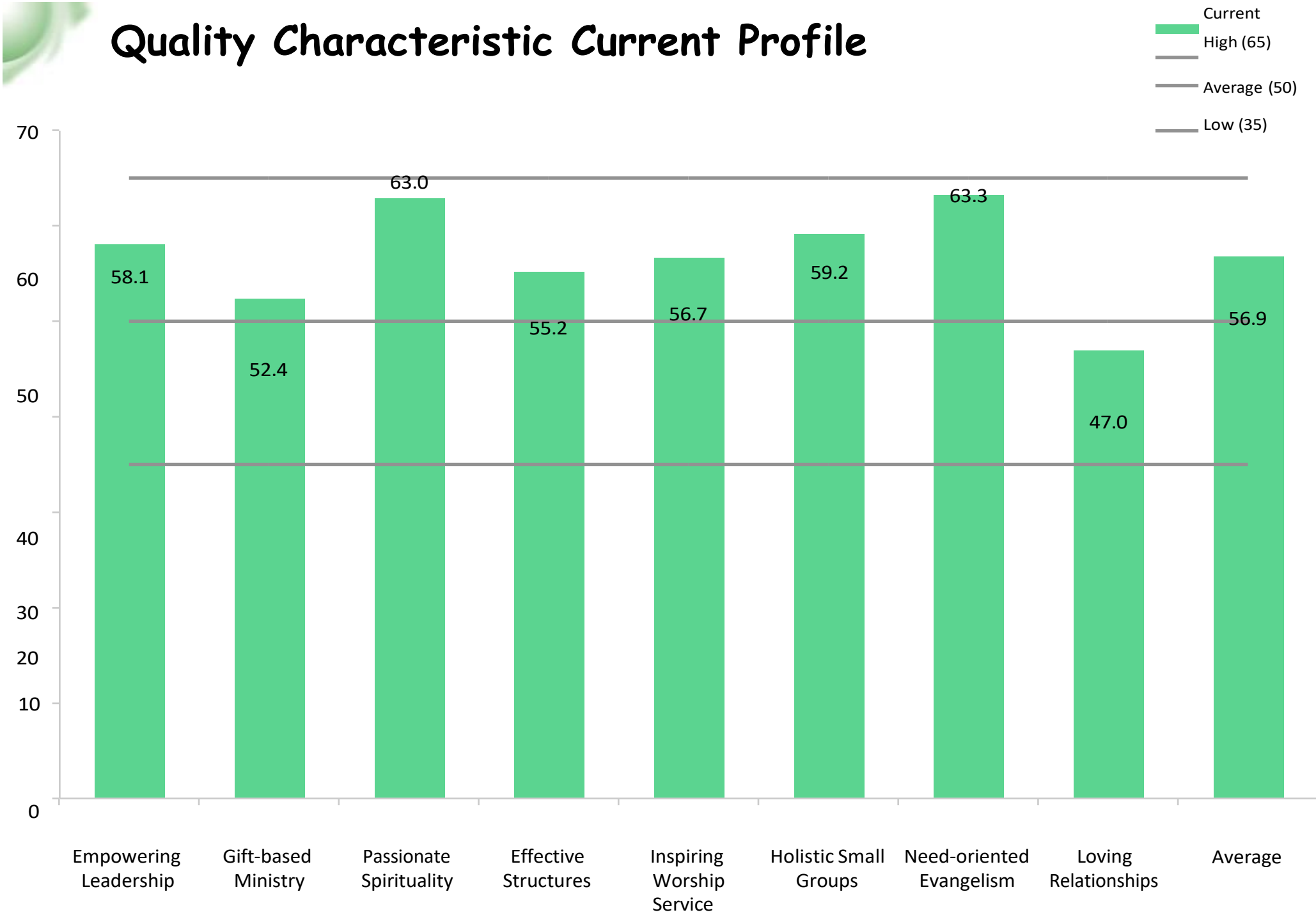


Survey Participants by Age Groups and Gender

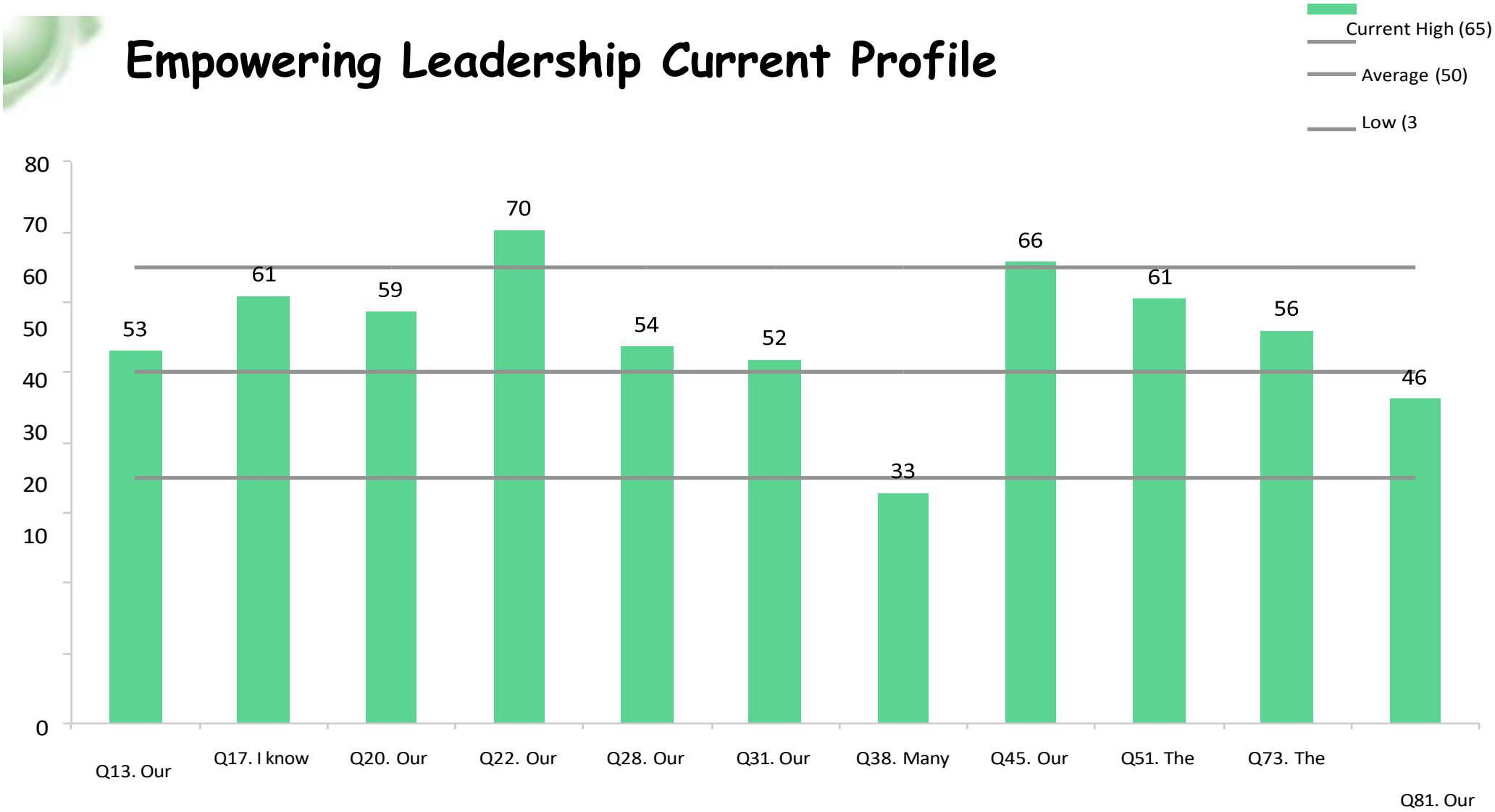




Quality Characteristic Current Profile

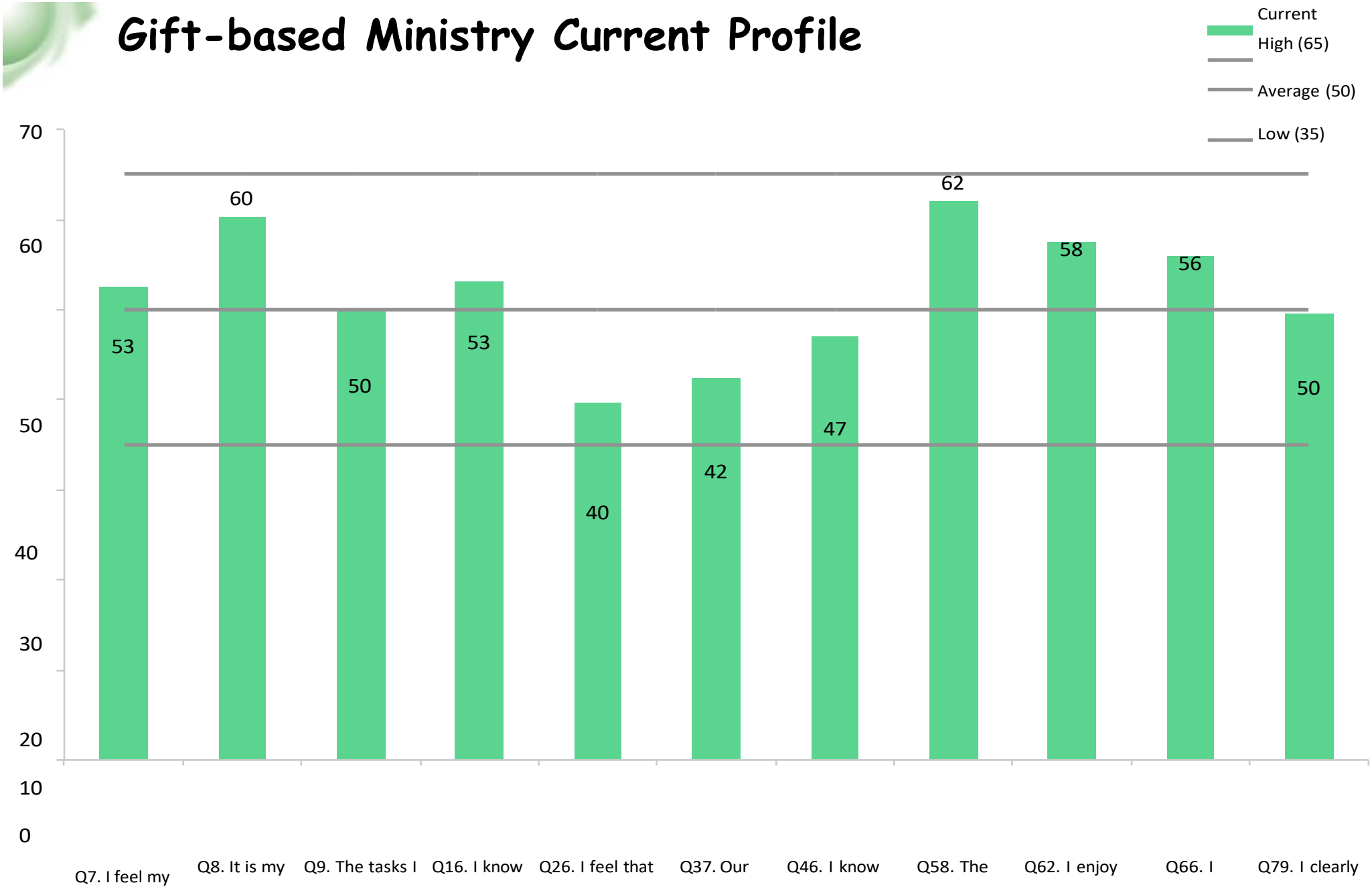


Empowering Leadership Current Profile



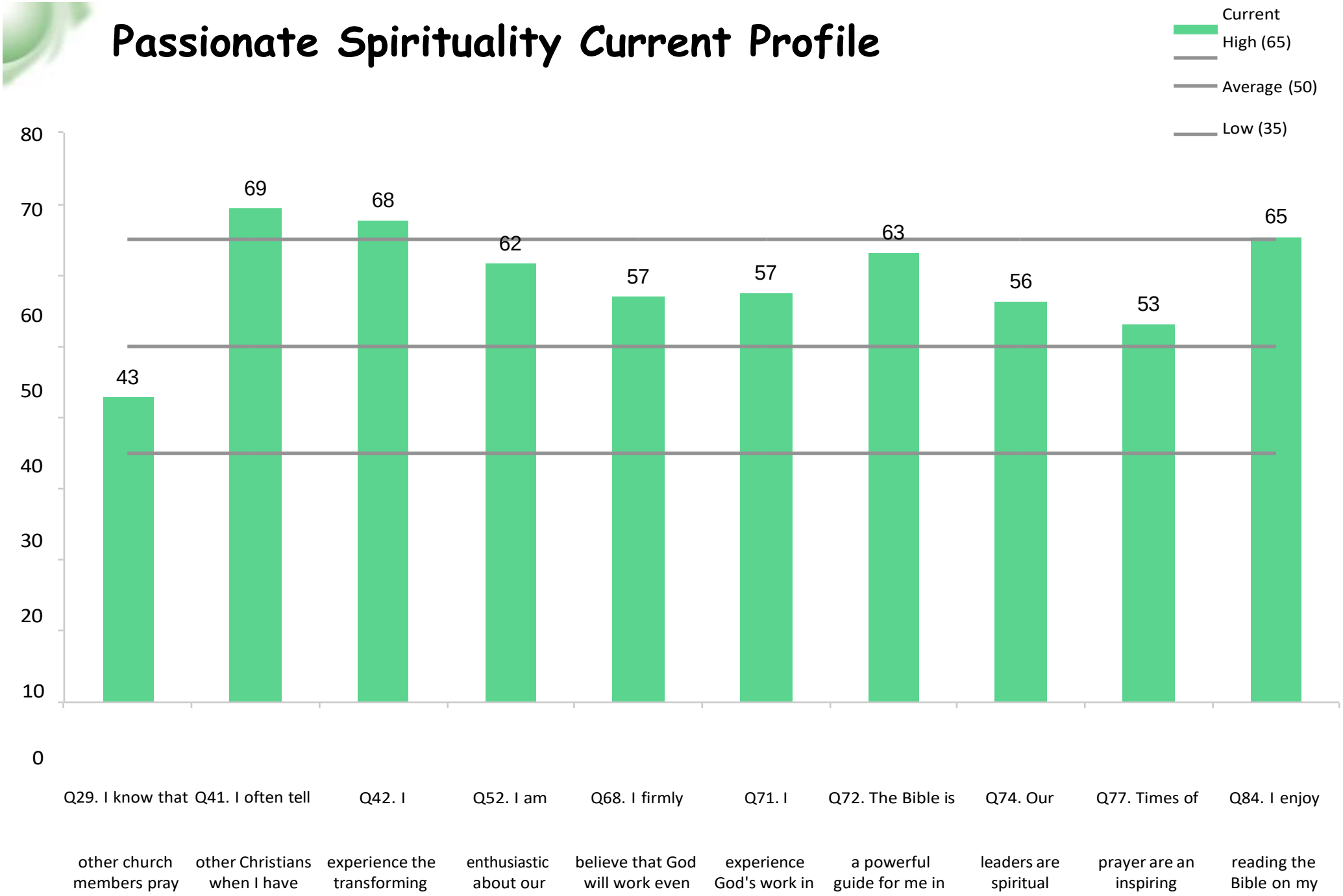
accountable for meeting the commitments I make.	limit my ministry.	people who do not know Jesus Christ.	things.	actively participate in our worship services.	church to grow.	themselves rather than collaborate with others. (neg)	the tasks for which they are gifted.	assistance from an outside person (coach, consultant, other pastors on how to develop)

Gift-based Ministry Current Profile



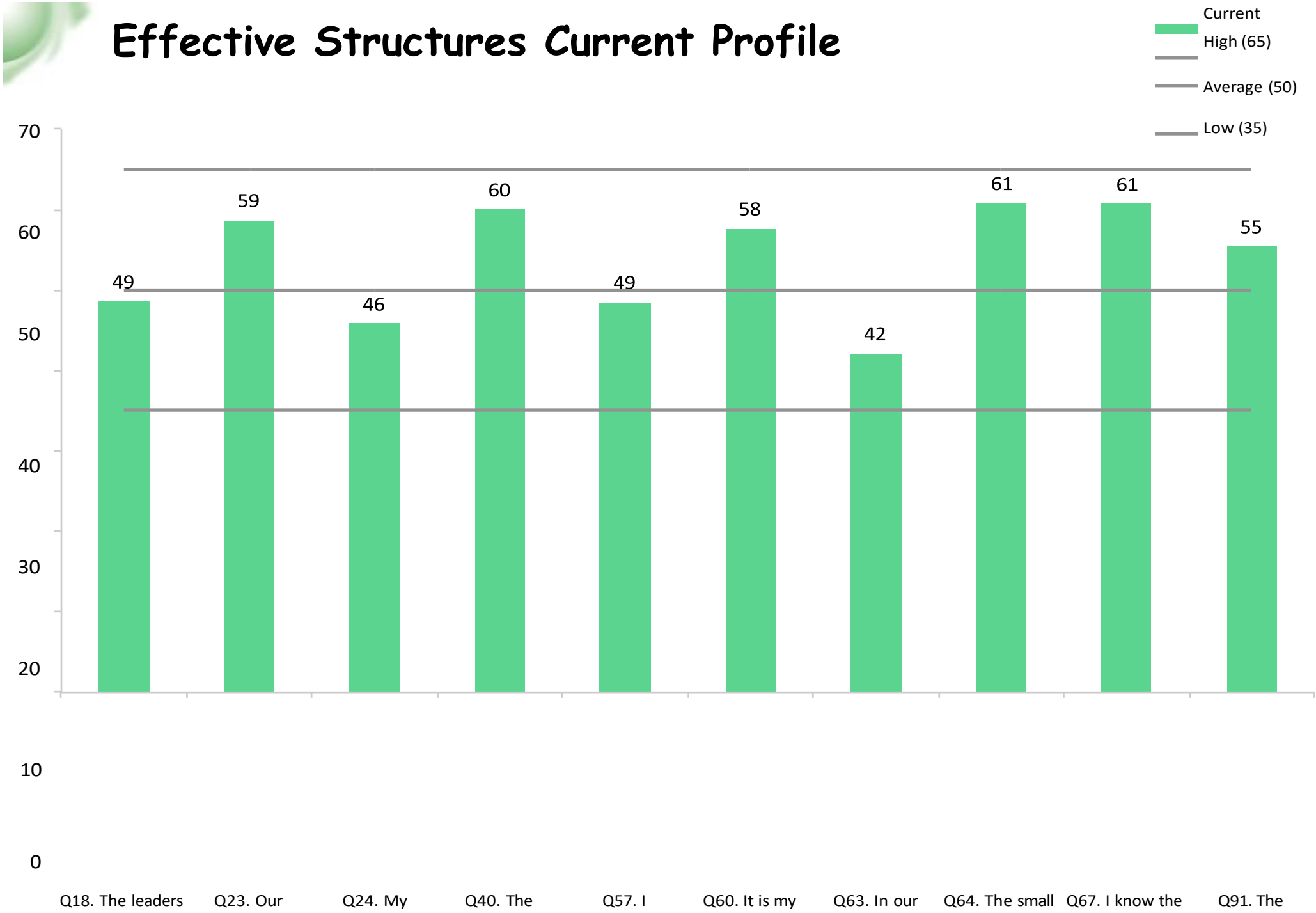
task in our church is a positive challenge that stretches my faith.	experience that God obviously uses my work for building the church.	perform in our church match my gifts.	what value my work has in the overall work of our church.	my church supports me in my ministry.	church regularly offers help for people to discover their gifts.	my gifts.	volunteers of our church are trained for their ministries.	the tasks I do in our church.	experience the benefits of working on a team in our church.	understand what is expected from me when fulfilling my task in our

Passionate Spirituality Current Profile



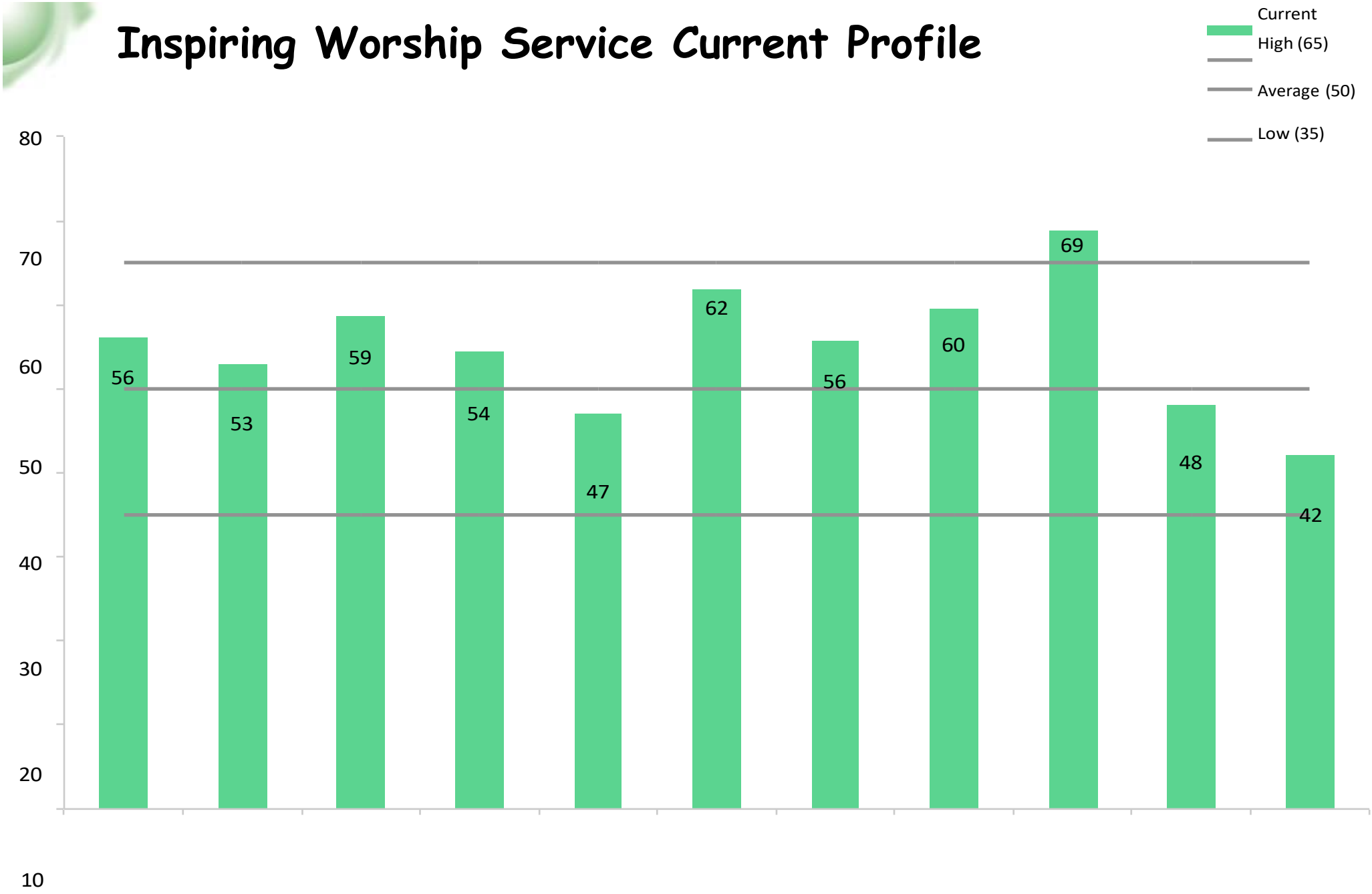
for me regularly.	experienced something from God.	influences faith has in the different areas of my life (profession, family, spare time, etc).	church.	more powerfully in our church in the coming years.	my life.	the decisions of everyday life.	examples to me.	experience for me.	own.

Effective Structures Current Profile



of the ministries of our church meet regularly for planning.	leaders actively support church development.	contributions to church life are reviewed regularly.	volunteers of our church are trained frequently.	understand clearly how the different parts of our church work together.	impression that the organizational structure of our church hinders church life rather than promotes it. (neg)	church we often try new things.	group and ministry leaders in our church each mentor at least one other person.	goals we are working towards as a church.	activities of our church are well planned and organized.

Inspiring Worship Service Current Profile



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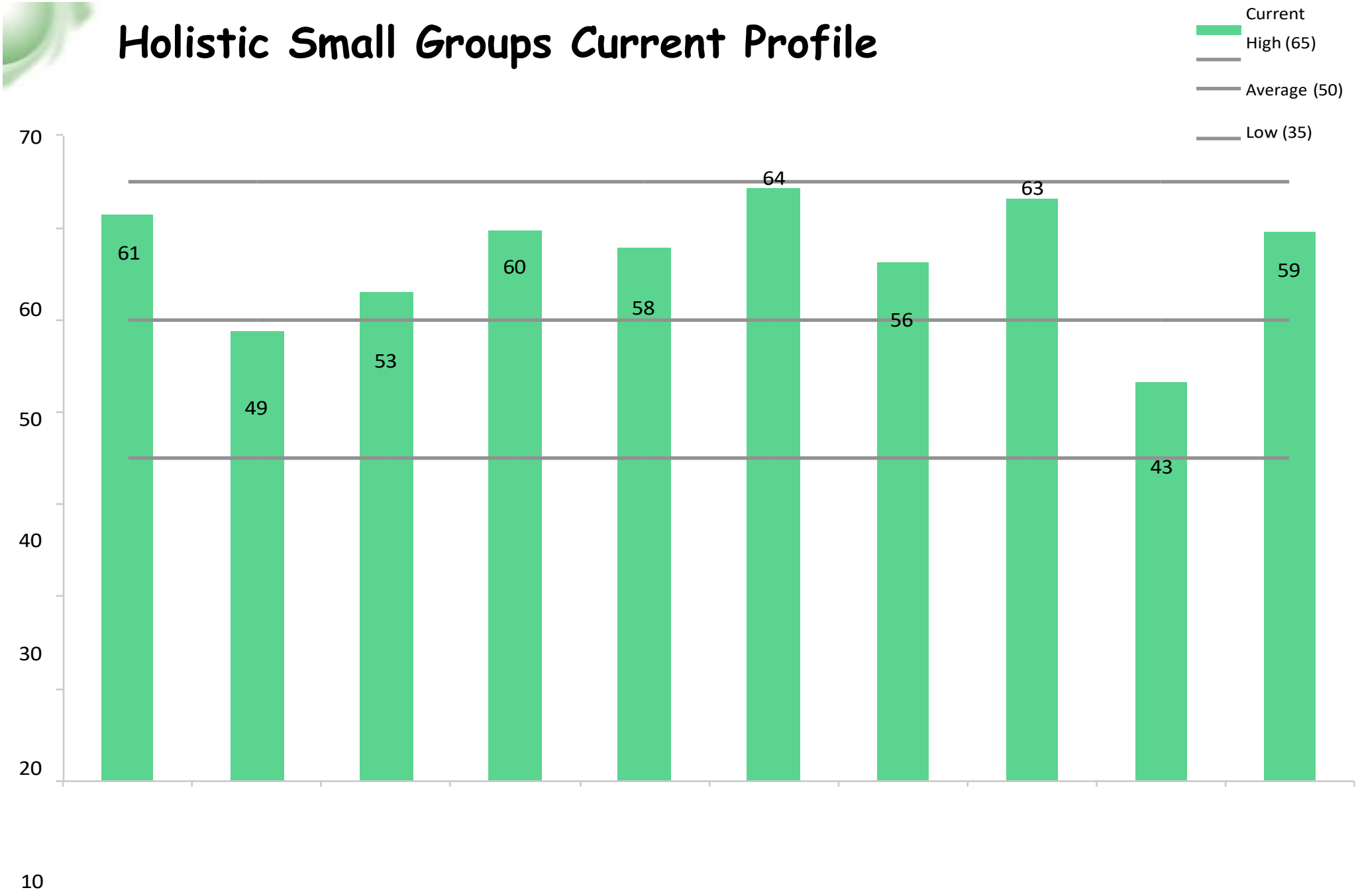
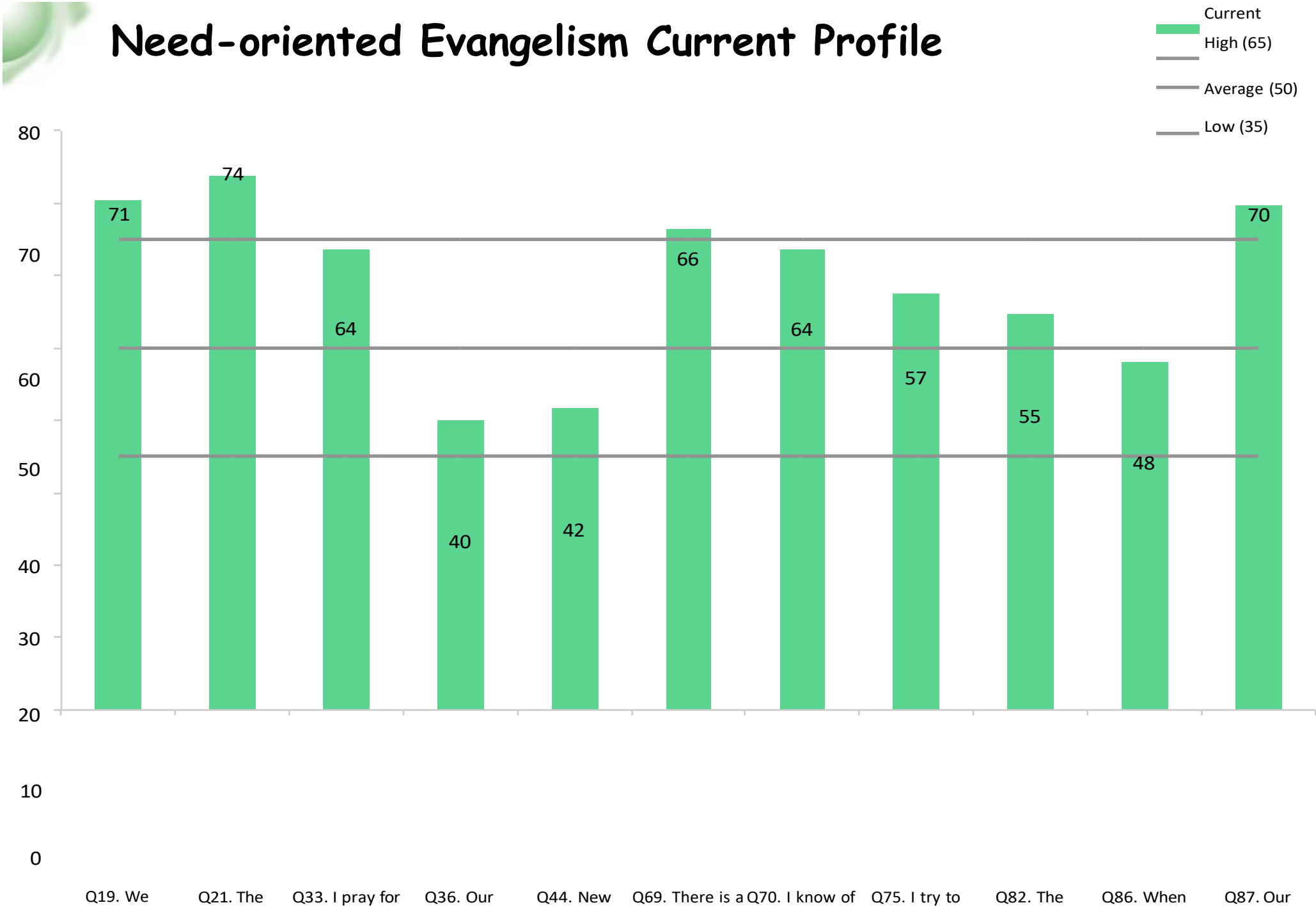
Q10. I feel the sermon in the worship service speaks to my personal situation.	Q12. I connect with God in a meaningful way during the worship service.	Q15. I feel that the worship service has a positive influence on me.	Q25. I enjoy listening to the sermons in the worship service.	Q47. Attending the worship service is an inspiring experience for me.	Q50. I can easily explain why I come to the worship service.	Q53. The music in the worship service helps me worship God.	Q56. I'm often bored during the worship service. (neg)	Q85. Our worship service attracts unchurched visitors.	Q88. I always look forward to the worship service.	Q89. I prepare myself to participate in the worship service.

Holistic Small Groups Current Profile



Q11. My small group helps me with the challenges of life.	Q27. In my small group we spend lots of time on mythings which are irrelevant to me. (neg)	Q34. My small group helps me to grow in my spiritual life.	Q49. I am a member of a group in our church where it is possible to talk about personal problems.	Q54. In the groups I belong to it is easy for newcomers to be integrated.	Q55. I am a member of a group in our church where others will pray with me if I need it.	Q65. I am a member of a small group in which I feel at home.	Q76. The leaders of our small groups are trained for their tasks.	Q78. Our small groups actively seek to multiply themselves.	Q90. In my small group we trust each other.

Need-oriented Evangelism Current Profile



encourage new Christians in our church to get involved in evangelism immediately.

evangelistic activities of our church are relevant for my friends and family who do not yet know Jesus Christ.

my friends, colleagues and relatives who do not yet know Jesus Christ, that they will come to faith.

church tries to help those in need (food, clothing, education, counsel, etc.).

Christians find friends in our church quickly.

lot of creativity in the evangelistic activities of our church.

a number of individuals in our church who have the gift of evangelism.

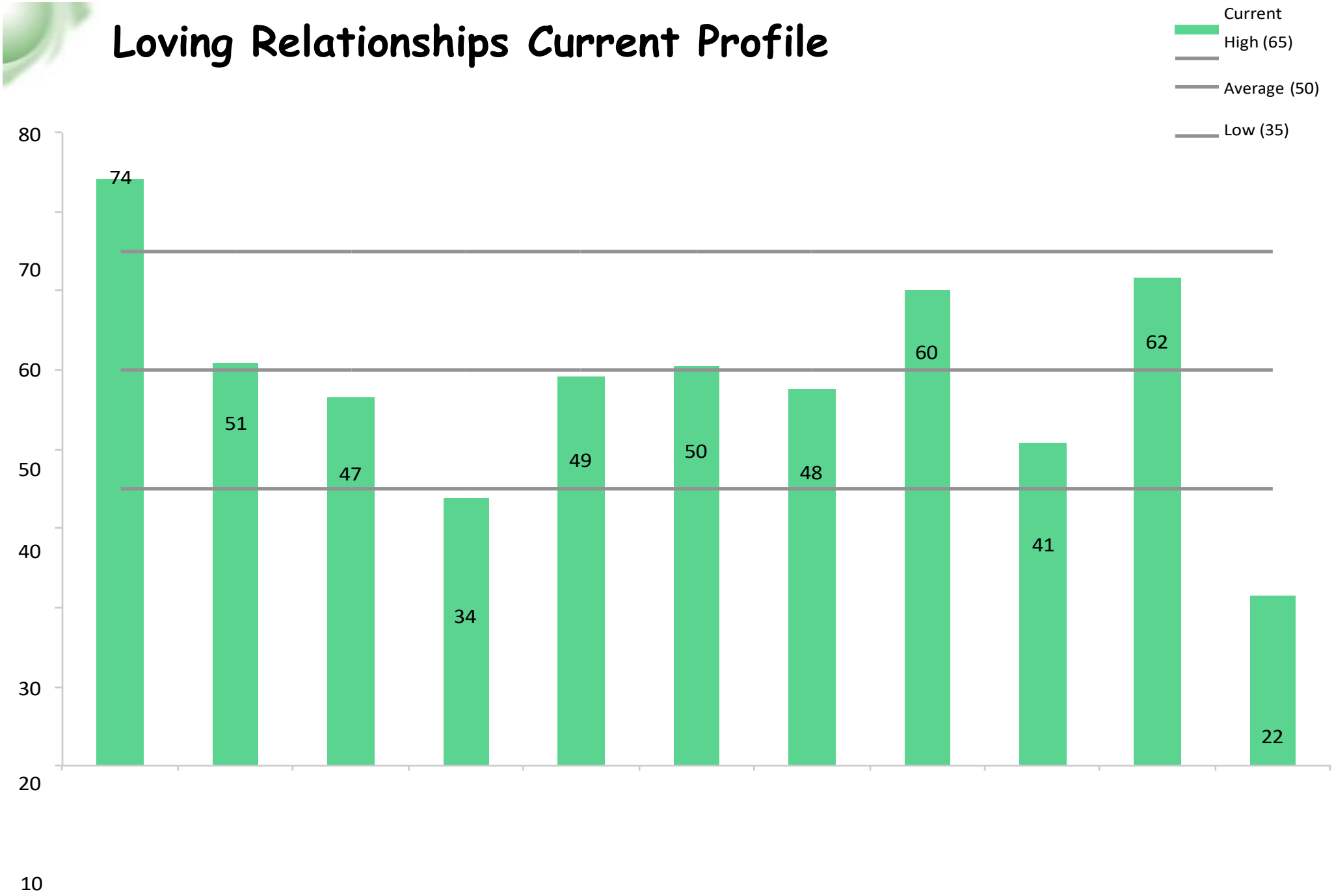
deepen my relationships with people who do not yet know Jesus Christ.

leaders of our church support individual Christians in their evangelistic endeavors.

new people come to church events, we approach them openly and lovingly.

church provides practical help for new Christians to grow in their faith.

Loving Relationships Current Profile



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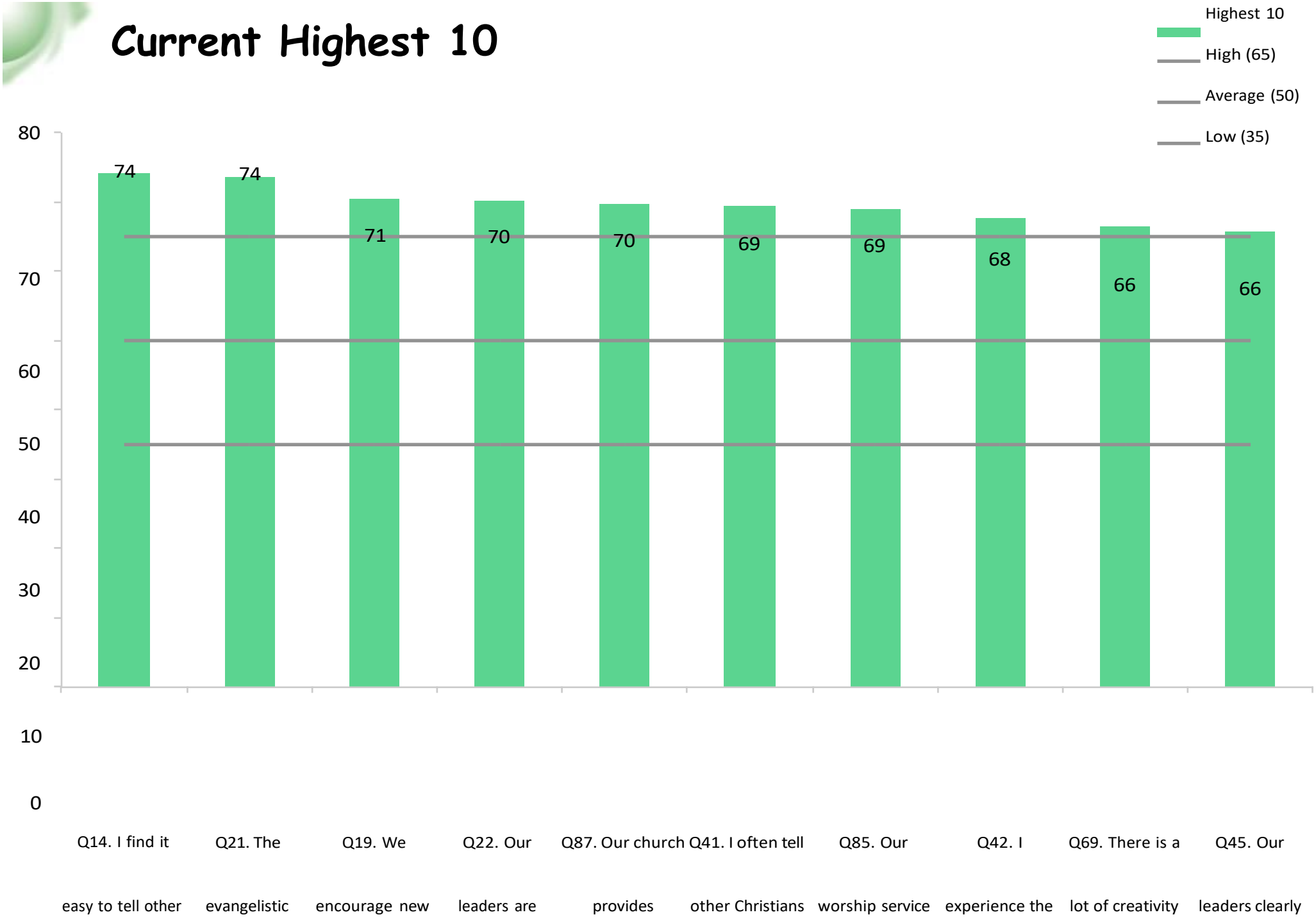
Q14. I find it easy to tell other Christians about my feelings.	Q30. In our church it is possible to talk with other people about personal problems.	Q32. There is a lot of joy and laughter in our church.	Q35. The atmosphere of our church is strongly influenced by praise and compliments.	Q39. I can rely upon my friends at church.	Q43. I know of people in our church with bitterness toward others. (neg)	Q48. When someone in our church does a good job, I tell them.	Q59. I share with various people in our church about my spiritual journey.	Q61. Our leaders show concern for the personal problems of those in ministry.	Q80. If I have a disagreement with a member of our church, I will go to them in order to resolve it.	Q83. Our leaders regularly praise and acknowledge volunteers.

Current Highest 10



Christians about my feelings. (LR)

activities of our church are relevant for my friends and family who do not yet know Jesus Christ. (NoE)

Christians in our church to get involved in evangelism immediately. (NoE)

clearly concerned for people who do not know Jesus Christ. (EL)

practical help for new Christians to grow in their faith. (NoE)

when I have experienced something from God. (PS)

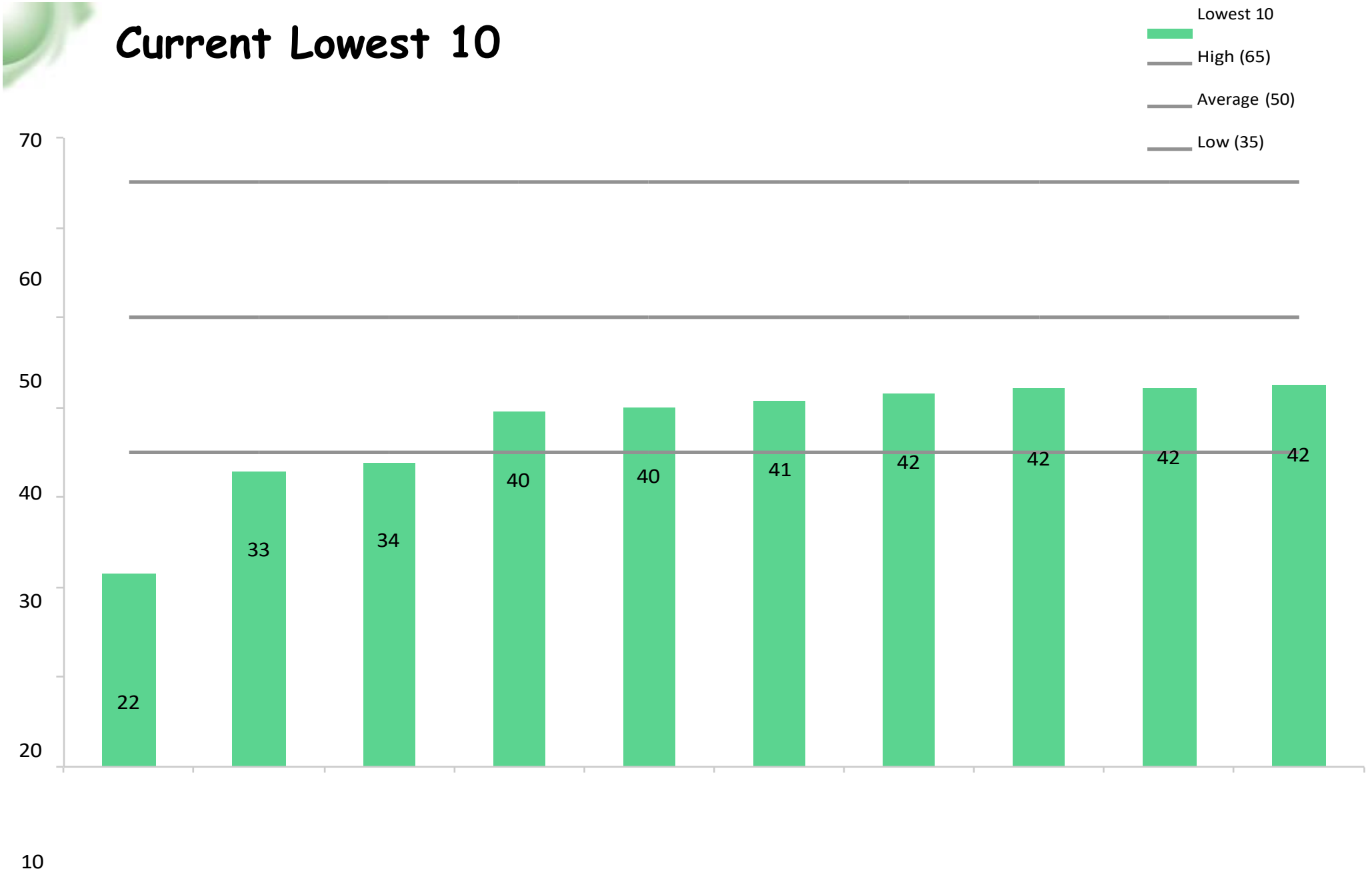
attracts unchurched visitors. (IWS)

transforming influences faith has in the different areas of my life (profession, family, spare time, etc). (PS)

in the evangelistic activities of our church. (NoE)

believe that God wants our church to grow. (EL)

Current Lowest 10



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Q83. Our leaders regularly praise and acknowledge volunteers. (LR)	Q38. Many people are given the opportunity to actively participate in our worship services. (EL)	Q35. The atmosphere of our church is strongly influenced by praise and compliments. (LR)	Q26. I feel that my church supports me in my ministry. (GbM)	Q36. Our church tries to help those in need (food, clothing, education, counsel, etc.). (NoE)	Q61. Our leaders show concern for the personal problems of those in ministry. (LR)	Q44. New Christians find friends in our church quickly. (NoE)	Q89. I prepare myself to participate in the worship service. (IWS)	Q63. In our church we often try new things. (ES)	Q37. Our church regularly offers help for people to discover their gifts. (GbM)

Current Capacity

High
Minimum Factor

value

80

can run well

65

can run

50

can walk

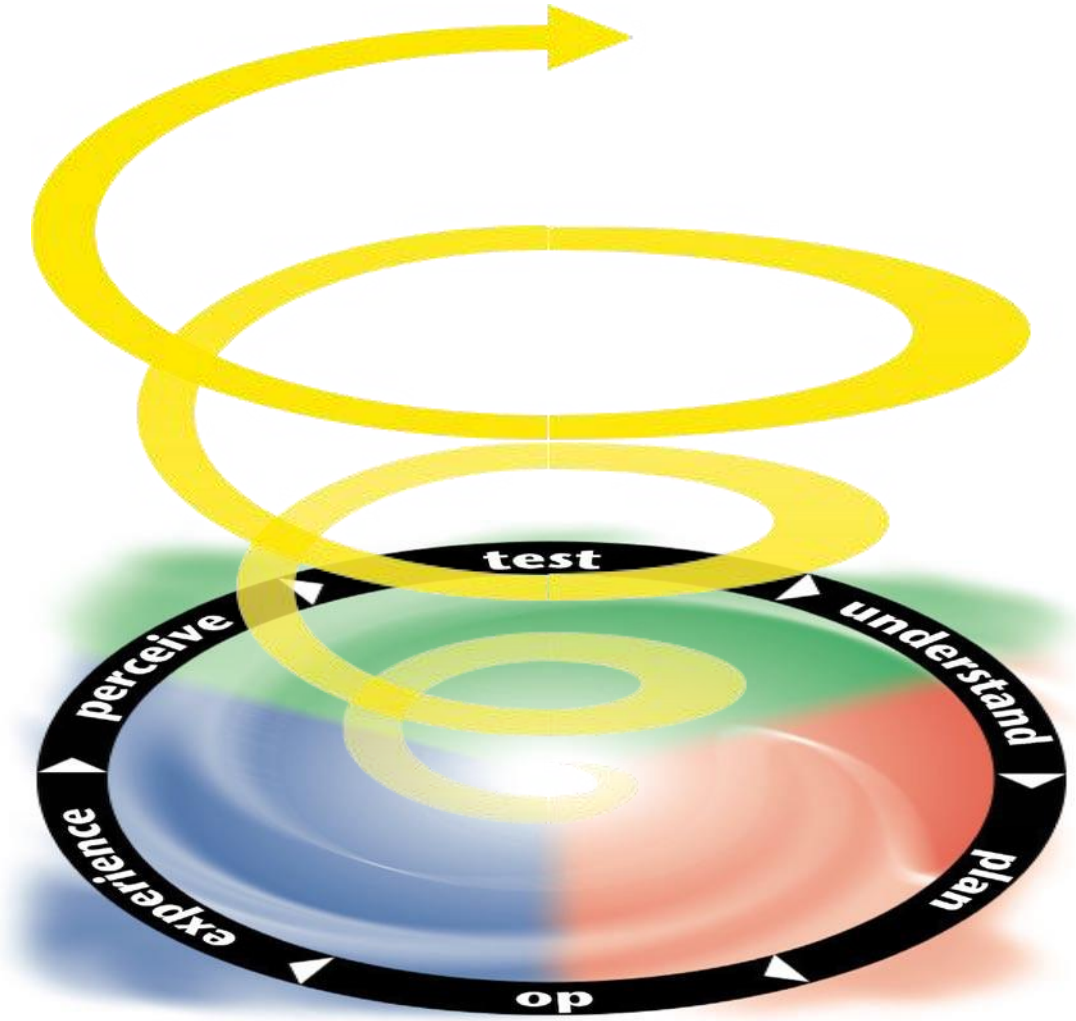
35

can stand

20

Low

Minimum Factor value: Loving relationships



The background to your results

As you read through the various charts in your NCD results, it will be important to understand what the numbers mean as well as how the results came about. Consider the following.

The research of NCD

The initial research of NCD was based on 1000 churches in 32 countries on all continents (now 60,000 surveys, 70 countries). It was aimed at, for the first time, **determining the universal principles of long-term church growth regardless of nationality, denomination, culture or worship style**.

Many theories about church growth were evaluated against the external benchmark of sustained numerical growth (growth of at least 10% per year for five years). This filters out gimmick driven growth or momentary spikes in attendance. It also **provides us with the most important answers as to what should be in place when God chooses to add people to the church and for those people to want to stay there and encourage others to be part as well**. Put another way, the overall question posed and answered by NCD research is, "What should each church and every Christian do to obey the Great Commission in today's world?" Collectively, the eight quality characteristics of NCD, and the partnership with God that they nurture, are the answer to the question.

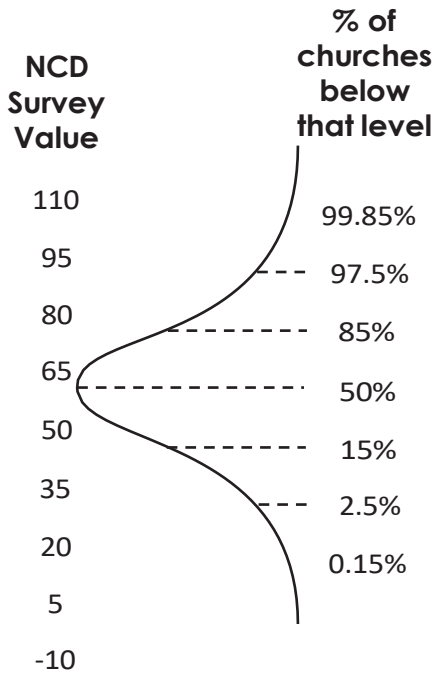
How your results were calculated

The NCD Survey is a standardised comparative analysis tool. This means it compares 'apples with apples' with reference to the average quality of apples in a given country. To do this, **the responses of a representative sample of those in your church with some form of ministry, small group involvement and who attend worship services, were compared with the responses in the national database from people who fit the same broad criteria**. Your result for each question and quality characteristic was then plotted on the charts in this guide relative to that national average. Because the results are standardised around an average, it means that for every church that has a result on one side of the average, there are about as many churches in your country with a result just as far on the other side of the average.

The numbers

The average value for any question or quality characteristic in this guide is 50. Coincidentally, this corresponds with the 50th percentile for churches in your country. However **the numbers shown on each page are not percentages**, but index values based on a standard bell curve distribution with a standard deviation of 15 points. To convert a given NCD value to a percentage, see the table to the right.

Note that **the score for any given quality characteristic is not simply the average of the questions related to that area**. There are other weightings discovered through the research that collectively contribute to those final results.



The "exact meaning" behind each question

As you read any of the individual survey questions in this guide, keep in mind that **there is no one specific meaning behind each question**. As with any question ever asked, there are as many ways of looking at it as there are people responding to it. On the basis of NCD research into long-term growth trends, all that can be said of any given question from the survey is that, for *whatever* reason, when a group of people collectively respond to it in a positive way, it is indicative of a healthy growth dynamic in the background.

So what you must do is to **think about each question and the response to it in the specific context of your church and consider all possibilities**. Even put yourself in the shoes of specific survey participants to imagine what they may have been thinking when responding positively or hesitating strongly to a given question. The wording of survey questions within this guide is identical to the NCD questionnaire itself. This allows you to ask the question, "When faced with exactly these words and under the protection of anonymity,

why did the average person in our sample group respond positively/negatively?" Or, "What from the life of our church went through the average person's mind when they read exactly these words?" Participants may not always be able to articulate clearly why they responded as they did, but there will be reasons.

Negatively worded questions

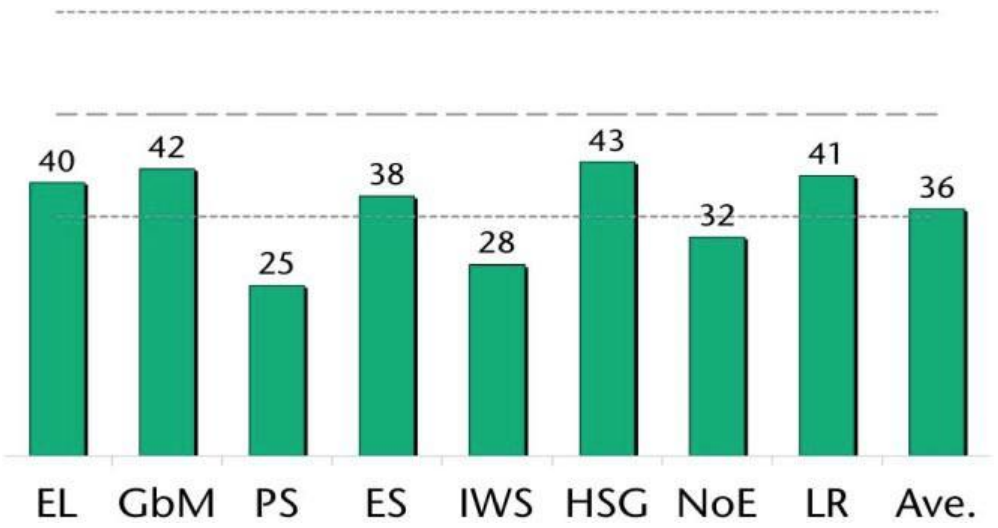
A few questions, you will notice, are worded negatively. This is indicated in the guides by a (neg) after the question. Some questions are worded this way because the underlying issues cannot be assessed by using positive wording. For example, when answering the question, "Attending the worship service is an inspiring experience for me" people tend to look at the whole service. But when answering the question, "I'm often bored in the worship service" there is a tendency to respond about a specific part of the service.

In the instance of negatively worded questions, the results have been reversed on the chart so that those questions can be compared directly with the other positively worded questions. For example, in the boredom in worship question mentioned above, a high result means that people are not bored. So, **the results for these questions should be interpreted the same as for all other questions – the higher up the graph the healthier**.

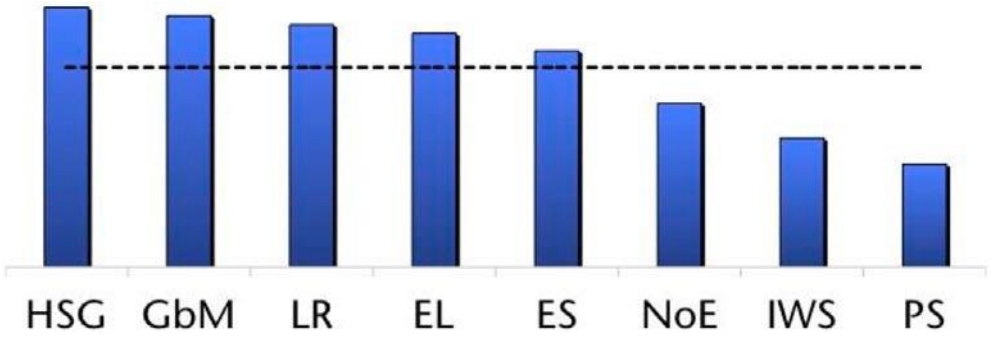
Story and Status Guides – different points of comparison

While this guide shows your results in comparison to the national average for churches, the Story Guide your church has received shows your results in comparison to your church's own average. This is to simplify the Story Guide discussion so that it keeps focused on your maximum and minimum factor areas in comparison with each other without the added complexity of comparing them to the national average as well. Ultimately, **it is more important that a church focuses on what its minimums are and not what value they have scored. Therefore, the information you have available in this guide should be used with discretion in such a way that it does not excessively burden your church if the results are very low, or leave the church feeling like "we're already good enough" if the results are high**.

The example below shows this difference in the plotting of a church's quality characteristic results for the same sample church.



In the Status Guide (green), **the middle dashed line on the chart corresponds to the national average of 50 points**.



In the Story Guide (blue), **the dashed line on the chart corresponds to this church's own average** of 36 points (the quality characteristics being reordered by rank to emphasis the story approach).

Age and gender demographics

When considering your results, keep in mind the make up of the survey participant group. If the survey instructions were followed, the survey sample will be (along with other criteria) a representative sample of the age and gender demographics in your church. The pages referred to below will show you how your sample is constituted based on those two categories.

Age distribution of survey participants (page 6)

This chart shows the distribution of the survey sample according to seven age group options listed on the questionnaire. It is not important that every age group is evenly represented or represented at all. **It is of greater interest that the percentages roughly relate to the proportion of active attenders your church has in each grouping**.

Consider which age groups are represented in the church's leadership. Your leaders do not necessarily have to represent the largest age groups. There could be good reasons why just the opposite might be beneficial. However, it is helpful to acknowledge the very different dynamics associated with a mainly older leadership group leading a predominantly younger congregation, or a young leadership team providing leadership to a mostly older congre- gation. While both of these scenarios can work very well, on some occasions, frustration at the leadership level can simply relate to the gap between these generations in either direction.

Knowing the age and gender demographics can be helpful in understanding why particular results have emerged. **If there are age groups comprising of significant numbers of people who are not represented on the leadership team, make sure you encourage the inclusion of some of the "missing" leadership age groups in the discussions around the NCD process**. That one simple step will enhance the discoveries that take place and therefore the next steps of your church towards greater health.

- ❍ Are you listening to and including in your result discussions the full spectrum of age groups represented in your church?
- ❍ Are there age groups you should be working extra hard at trying to understand and embrace?

Gender distribution of survey participants (page 6)

Most of what has just been said about age groups also applies to gender distribution within the church. There are several questions that should be asked in this regard. They will help in shaping who should be included in the NCD process discussions in order to ensure that a realistic picture of the church is being seen and realistic plans will ultimately emerge.

- ❍ On balance, which gender does most of the ministry work in your church?
- ❍ Does your leadership team represent the workload distribution and spiritual influence of your church in terms of gender?
- ❍ Who, in terms of gender, do your survey results most reflect? Does this line up with the most influential gender in your church? If not, what are the implications of this?

In both age distribution and gender distribution, regardless of whether you feel the survey sampling could have been slightly more precise, the results are a very accurate picture of those represented — the kind of people the leadership most wanted to hear from.

My thoughts and questions

Sustainability

Your church is a living body with the potential to move, grow, bear fruit, multiply... and get sick. While the NCD process as a whole is focused on increasing health and therefore fruitfulness, **it is important to consider the urgency of that remedial action and the natural effects of not taking it**.

The systems of your body

Like any body, your church is made up of what could be called systems. In the human body these systems are the muscular, skeletal, cardiovascular, digestive, respiratory, nervous, etc. In the church, the systems are empowering leadership, gift-based ministry, passionate spirituality etc. In both types of bodies, every system is essential, interrelated and depends upon all of the others. **If one system is sick or under-developed, it will place an additional load on all of the others and the body as a whole**.

Imagine that your muscles are better developed than 85% of people on earth. On the down side though, your heart is only healthier than that of 15% of people. What is going to happen to you? You are capable of performing some incredible feats of strength and many people may even be drawn to you as they marvel at your great power. However, without intervention, such feats will be short lived. Eventually, your unhealthy heart will simply fail to keep up with your muscles. The feats of strength will fade away and eventually your muscles will wither if you don't die of a heart attack first.

Sadly, churches, revivals and even whole movements through church history have likely died or paled into insignificance as a result of trying to defy this simple reality. They start out with a great strength in a particular area and see marvelous things happen, but after some time, collapse. Often those involved become disillusioned and wonder 'What happened in the end?' The truth is that nothing happened in the end. The effect of neglecting certain systems long before that time, simply came to fruition.

This muscle/heart example is exactly like a church very focused on Need-oriented evangelism with an NCD score of 65 (85%) but whose work in discovering, utilising and developing its people's gifts is somewhat lower at 35 (15%) (review percentage chart on page 19). Despite all the passion in the world to see people saved, God simply did not create any living thing to function fruitfully over the long-term with two of its

Using resources for growth or just maintenance?

When a church has a large minimum/maximum factor difference, the extra resources required just to maintain its health are considerably higher. In the human body example, this takes the form of compensatory medication, extra trips to the doctor and perhaps even hospital stays. In the church it could take the form of additional conflict resolution, recovery from burnout and many other resource-hungry issues.

The good news is that **reducing the number of points between your maximum and minimum factor simply involves being diligent about strengthening your minimum factor areas**. The result? A church that is not only healthier and more fruitful, but will endure in its Kingdom influence.

Sustainability reference points (front page)

Refer to the front page of this guide and consider the following...

- A Min-Max difference of 15 points or less shows strong sustainability as the systems of the church body are becoming very well integrated.
- A Min-Max difference of 15-30 points (more than one standard deviation) is cause for concern. There is a degree of urgency emerging as the minimum factor/s are putting some significant downward pressure on the other quality characteristics and therefore the health of your church.
- If your Min-Max is above 30 points, there will be considerable energy being spent in simply maintaining the church where it is and there is a high risk of the overall health of the church collapsing if remedial action is not taken. This is cause for serious engagement with your church's results as a matter of high priority.
- Consider the urgency of dealing with your church's results based upon your Min-Max difference.

For your interest, in your minimum and maximum factor areas, the percentage of churches below your church is:

major systems so far out of balance — least of all, his Church. This level of difference between the minimum and maximum factor is not that uncommon in churches around the world. The specific minimum and maximum quality characteristics will differ, but the principle is the same — **balance underpins sustainability**.

Maximum Factor 81.3%

Minimum Factor 42.1%

Minimum factor detail

The detail behind your minimum factor is particularly helpful in making sure that assumptions are not made about why that quality character- istic has scored poorly compared to the rest. Remember that if over time, the leadership had clearly understood your minimum factor area and its importance, it would probably not have become the minimum factor. Therefore, **a growing understanding of your churches unique issues within this area can prevent the leadership from sticking with the first idea that is presented, or simply following the loudest voice in the room, whose opinion may not be particularly objective**.

Themes across your minimum factor (page 15)

Look across the lowest few questions in your minimum factor to identify connected sub-themes. For example, in passionate spirituality, the questions "Our leaders are spiritual examples to me" and "I firmly believe that God will work even more powerfully in our church in the coming years" might both be low. In the unique context of such a church, it may become apparent there is a strong link between these questions and one can even picture how those dynamics play out in everyday church life.

Based on your observations of the life of your church...

- Which low scoring questions seem to have a connection with each other? What does that combination look like in church life?
- How would you summarise in a few words the common theme behind the low questions within your minimum factor?

Contrasts within your minimum factor (page 15)

Aside from the low points within your minimum factor, it is also of value to look at the contrasts it may contain. These contrasts can be clues to the deeper challenges facing the future development of your church. For example, in effective struc- tures, the question "I understand clearly how the different parts of our church work together" may score highly, but the question "It is my impression that the organisational structure of our church hinders church life rather than promotes it" might score poorly. In such a situation, it might become apparent to one that "People know how it fits together... but just don't think it works!"

When looking at some of the larger differences between the individual questions of your minimum factor, it is important to make sure that those variations are statistically significant. As a starting point, only look at combi- nations of questions that are at least 15 points apart. Keep in mind that the ideal is for all factors to have high results and be balanced. Therefore, large contrasts mean that there is a lack of interdependence within that character- istic. Looking at the various high/low contrasts…

- Which contrasts between questions stand out to you as showing an obvi- ous lack of integration or interdependence?
- How would you explain these contrasts from your observations of church life?
- What missing or unfruitful processes or practices in church life have led to these contrasts?
- What connections can you see between the minimum factor detail and themes contained within it and your church's Summary Guide and Story Guide themes?

Sometimes in a given set of results, the minimum factor detail is all generally low without much contrast. In these instances, apart from taking note of what that overall picture communicates, it is often of greater value to look at the lowest 10 question page referred to in the next section.

My thoughts and questions

Lowest & highest 10 questions

Your lowest 10 scoring questions from across the whole survey form a unique virtual minimum factor. (The quality characteristic they are primarily associated with is abbreviated in brackets beneath each question.) **These questions represent the issues that are collectively limiting the long-term growth of your church to the greatest extent right now**. Substantial progress simply will not be sustainable or even take place unless they are progressively addressed.

Exploring this group of questions is especially helpful when your church has a number of low scoring quality characteristics that are within only a few points of each other (check on page 7), thereby making it difficult to point to a clear minimum factor area. However, even if your minimum factor is at least five points lower than the next lowest quality characteristic, the lowest 10 group can be very insightful.

Lowest 10 questions (page 17)

Look across the questions on your lowest 10 page and make a note of any that seem to you to have a connection with each other. For example, if the list included low scores for questions such as...

"The leaders of our church prefer to do the work themselves rather than collaborate with others."

"The leaders of our church concentrate on the tasks for which they are gifted."

"I experience the benefits of working on a team in our church."

"The small group and ministry leaders in our church each mentor at least one other person."

...you might sense that this points to a general challenge with leaders working together with others. You should see evidence of this in everyday church life.

Based on your observations of the life of your church...

- Which lowest 10 questions seem to have a strong connection with each other? Where have you seen that combination play out?
- How would you summarise in a few words each of the sub-groups of questions you can see within your lowest 10 page?

Lowest & highest 10 question combinations (pages 16 & 17)

The other way to gain insight from your lowest 10 questions is to contrast them with your highest 10 questions. To do this, you simply flick between the two pages asking yourself, "If this question scored high, but this question scored low, what could that be telling us?"

Based on your observations of the life of your church...

- Which contrasts stand out to you?
- How would you explain each notable contrast?
- What missing or unfruitful, processes or practices in church life have led to these contrasts?
- What connections can you see between the lowest and highest 10 question pages and your church's Summary Guide and Story Guide themes?

My thoughts and questions

Current capacity

There is no evidence in the massive NCD International database that an unhealthy church has any more difficulty improving their results than a church starting from a medium or high level of health. Churches of all levels have a minimum factor and churches of all levels display good and poor progress. So what makes the difference?

The health spiral

High quality churches are those which have deliberately (or intuitively) learnt to cycle all aspects of church life through each stage of the NCD Cycle in a thorough and consistent way (see page 18). Therefore, to make progress on their minimum factor, churches of all levels need to move through the NCD Cycle on an ongoing basis more thoroughly with each revolution.

Aside from embracing or ignoring the need for cyclical growth, **the big difference between churches who make great progress and those who don't is the willingness and ability to soberly acknowledge and act on the basis of their current level on the health spiral – their current capacity**. This level is their current minimum factor level.

Understanding the levels

To understand these capacity levels, imagine the difference in helping a person to become a good runner whose current capacity to run scored an NCD value of 35 (ie. at the 15th percentile – see page 19) compared to someone who could already run. The person at 35 is not yet even able to stand up with confidence, so their immediate level of challenge must be far lower because of their lower current capacity. In cycle terms, they would have very limited...

- *understanding* of how to run
- ability to *plan* the first steps
- capacity to therefore *do* it
- *experience* of what running feels like
- *perception* as to what they were doing right or wrong
- *testing* skills for determining whether they were achieving the goal

It is exactly the same for a church with a lower current capacity. Therefore the approach to each cycle must be different depending on your level.

Matching load with capacity

The diagram (page 18) shows the health spiral using your current minimum factor as an example. It could equally depict the process ahead for any of your low scoring Summary or Story guide themes. The immediate implication of the capacity issue in the current cycle for your church is to make sure that the leadership is not reaching "up" for *understanding*, *planning*, *doing*, *experiencing*, *perceiving* and *testing* that is too far beyond them for now.

In the context of this guide, the leadership should not believe that it can, if they just discuss them long enough, *understand* all there is to know about your minimum factor issues. More *planning*, *doing*, *experience* etc. (through further cycles) will be necessary. So at any level of the spiral, "beyond reasonable doubt understanding" is more than enough for moving on.

The Cycle Starter concept associated with these guides, aims at helping your leaders to move one level higher on their spiral, and doing so in a few weeks. This simple step in the early stages of the process will take the leadership (and therefore church!) to a new level – a vantage point from which your understanding of the minimum factor issues becomes considerably clearer.

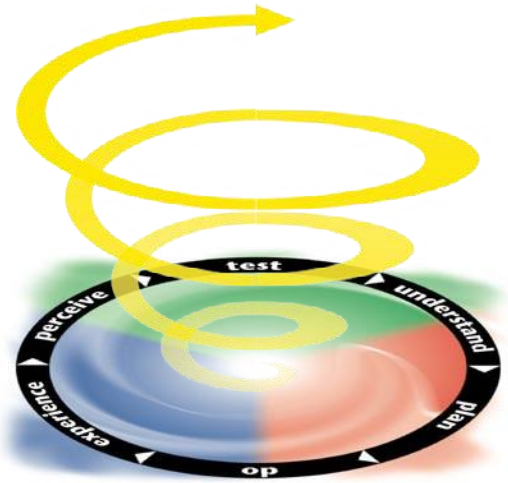
With all of the cycle stages the principle is the same. Soberly match the expectations and load that the leaders put on themselves with a realistic picture of their current capacity at this stage of the journey.

- Based on the dynamics of the growth spiral, in which cycle stages are the leaders likely to be tempted to overload (or under-challenge) themselves during the NCD process? What about yourself personally?

Warning: Presenting this concept to the church leadership should be done with great caution if your minimum factor level is particularly low, as some leaders may struggle with grasping the church's or even their own limited current capacity. Be mindful of this as you provide guidance and suggestions throughout the process. Such guidance will help your church to avoid getting bogged down with complex action plans, having made the whole *Natural* Church Development process too complicated and lofty.

Understanding the facts beyond reasonable doubt

So far (if following the suggested process) your church leadership will have discussed both the Summary and Story guides and embarked on personal Cycle Starters. Having also worked through this Status Guide, they are likely to have spiraled up to a whole new level of understanding about your current challenges. What the leadership now need to do is to express that new level of understanding as 'facts beyond reasonable doubt'.



Documenting the current facts beyond reasonable doubt

As the process of Natural Church Development is cyclical, **you must not get stuck on trying to understand everything before moving on to the next plan stage within the spiral**. It is not possible without further experimentation and experience. Instead you should ask, "What do we understand that is beyond reasonable doubt right now?" You then move onto simple revised plans that you will cycle again fairly quickly, eventually arriving back at yet another higher level of understanding.

On the following page, write down what you personally understand, beyond reasonable doubt, to be the strengths and weaknesses of your church based on your analysis so far. At the Status Guide discussion meeting, make sure that you firmly state what you believe the facts from the results to be. Others, who are perhaps not as strong in testing and understanding to establish facts, are likely to find it helpful for someone like yourself to make some clear, well thought through statements, as long as they know that you are also remaining open and teachable. Having stated your own perspective, invite others to comment or add to your statements. **If points are not generally agreed upon, leave them for a later cycle and simply focus upon those that are beyond reasonable doubt for the vast majority of those in the discussion**.

- Based on the Summary, Story and Status guides and your discussion so far, what are the basic facts beyond reasonable doubt about your church right now?
- Objectively, what do your results tell you that newcomers to your church are likely to experience?
- What facts are you willing to accept about your church that are a personal challenge to you?
- What has become a fact beyond reasonable doubt despite them being somewhat different to your pre-survey perceptions?
- How important are these findings for the future of your church? Be specific.
- What points raised by the guides or in discussion are you not yet convinced of and should therefore leave off a list of facts beyond reasonable doubt? Be sure to leave them off for now.

"Cycling together" discussion

Having completed the Status Guide discussion and documented current facts beyond reasonable doubt, **it is time to review each person's Cycle Starter exercise** that was initiated after the Story Guide discussion. Check with your pastor as to who is going to facilitate that discussion with the help of the "Cycling together" instructions (presented on page 28 of this guide or page 18 of the Story Guide). For your convenience, the "My Growth Cycle" page introduced in the Story Guide meeting is included on page 29 of this guide.

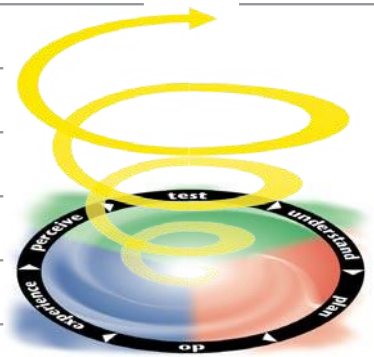
As these discussions take place, keep in mind and try to provide gentle steerage in accordance with your church's current capacity (see previous page) and the general findings presented from the Summary, Story and Status guides.

Be sure that you are ready to share about your own Cycle Starter progress and what you intend to put in place as your revised or new plan for the next short cycle.

What are the facts beyond reasonable doubt regarding our…

…strengths?

…weaknesses?



Cycling together

Cycling together to explore your church's current challenges simply involves **following the instructions on any given Cycle Starter sheet** (introduced in the Story Guide). However, if you are facilitating Cycle Starter discussions in a group (which should happen each time your group gets together to consider your church's results), here are some suggestions.

If facilitating discussion, refer the group back to their personal Cycle Starter sheets while you read or summarise the following…

> *A growth cycle discussion simply involves putting your Cycle Starter sheet on the table and inviting others to ask the cycle questions starting at the Do stage, with the aim of helping them to move to a higher level on the growth spiral. If a person would like to talk through deeper personal issues with the group, we should make time for that. Otherwise, each person should move through his or her cycle questions in just a few minutes. So, who'd like to go first?*

If helpful, you can expland slightly on the questions for the group.

> ***Do: Are you following through and inviting God and others to go beyond your plan?*** *Are you actually doing what you said you would do while recognising you can't do it all alone and need the help of others?*
>
> ***Experience: Have you freed yourself to receive from God and others?*** *Have you given yourself the time and space to experience what has emerged from putting your plan into action?*
>
> ***Perceive: What do you see?*** *What do you think happened (whether you like it or not) as a result of putting your plan into action?*
>
> ***Test: How do you know that you are seeing clearly?*** *What means have you used to check you are being objective about your observations?*
>
> ***Understand: What are the facts?*** *What can you now state about your chosen challenge topic that is beyond reasonable doubt?*
>
> ***Plan: What is most important now?*** *If not the same plan, what refined or completely new plan is now a priority for your challenge topic?*

Creative questioning

Feel free to **invent and ask other questions** that relate to each of the cycle stages. The aim of the discussion is to help each other move through each stage of the cycle in an open, honest way and to ensure that everyone finishes with a simple, concrete revised plan for their next cycle until you meet again.

Be sure to **lock in a date for your next round of cycle discussions** (and discussing your next NCD Result Guide if appropriate).

Some will of course be more diligent than others with their personal growth cycle. It is important to **keep encouraging those faithful few**, because often, once others see the fruit that begins emerging in their lives, a very motivating Godly jealousy develops.

Anywhere… anytime… with anyone

Typically, for the sake of momentum, such discussions should take place at least monthly. However, **greater cycle discussion frequency will bring about far more rapid and consistent progress**.

Eventually, asking the cycle questions of other key influencers will be a natural part of everyday conversation. Until then, it will be important that designated cycle meetings take place. These meetings could be at the start of a leadership meeting, as part of a small group gathering, with a friend over lunch, or even as part of family dinner time discussions.

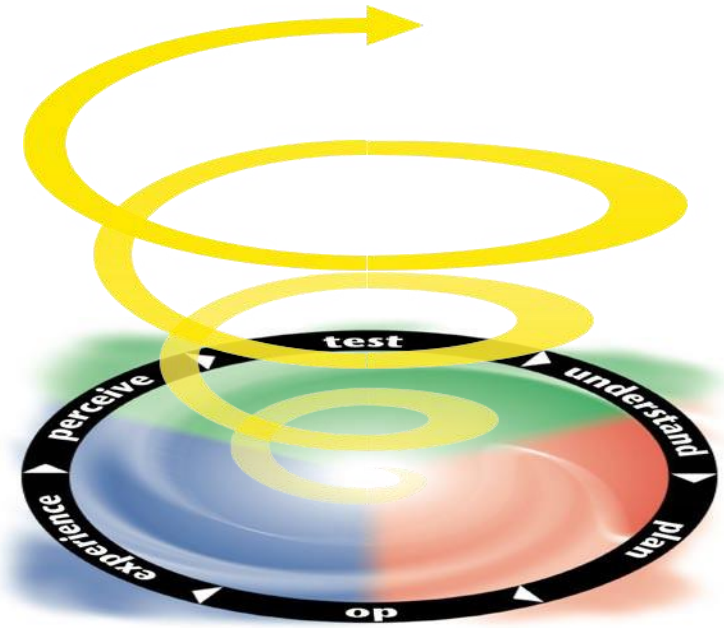
In short, **cycle discussion can take place anywhere**, **anytime**, **with anyone**. Though, your initial survey result group should at least meet a few times as a group until they are into the rhythm of consistent cyclical growth.

Connecting back into your results

In these initial cycle meetings, it will be important to **keep your NCD Result Guides on hand** in order to review your results with the benefit of fresh experiences and increased understanding.

For those interested, let them know that the Strategy Guide discussion will include broadening the process to include the wider church.

My Cycle Starter Plan



Our current challenges

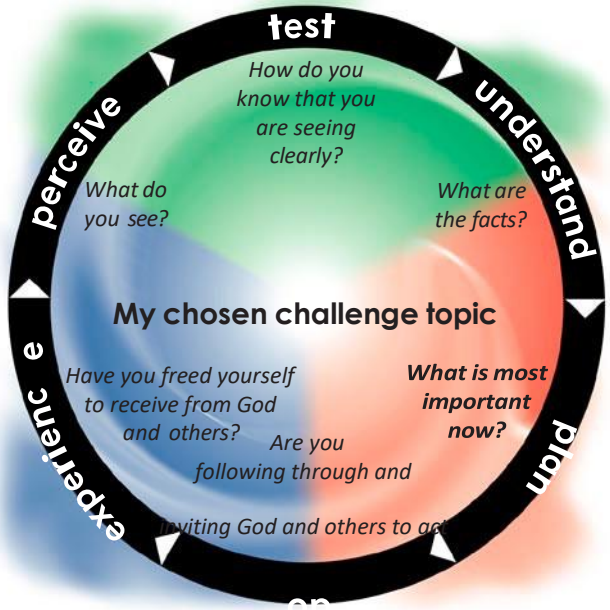
Fellowship

Loving relationships

joy

pastoral care

affirmation



APPENDIX B

2018 NCD Summary of Findings

Experience of Reconciling

#14
- Especially with core group of friends and small group
- Within age demographics, so as to be understood
- Prayer gatherings broaden this sense of community – praying for one another in that situation

#14
- Easier with 'core' church friends
- Easier with tight community of friends
- Easier with small group
- Can do this with like-minded people
- People within my age group are understanding
- Prayer meetings - sharing outside of comfort zone but always receive a blessing in doing so

#17
- Ministry leaders hold volunteers accountable in some areas (Lee), but not well in others
- Everyone agreed that they should be held accountable
- "The body of Christ missed you playing your role"
- Letting people know they matter is important
- Star Kids - lack of ownership for service but it takes effort to hold people accountable
- I feel accountable
- Depends who or which ministry - some are better than others
- Systems and practices and processes help (ushering)
- e-mail prior / thanks after

#43

- Comments that this question may have been left blank, hence the below average score. The question seemed to require either yes or no response, you either know someone who is harbouring bitterness or you don't. Is there a need for teaching on walking in grace and forgiveness???
- Good thing that it is lower

#59
- This happens when the atmosphere/situation is conducive (prayer gatherings, small groups, etc.)
- Testimonies/stories in the service set an atmosphere that is conducive to this
- If I wanted to I could - I think everyone is listened to
- Surprised it isn't higher
- Surprised it isn't lower
- Depends who your 'group' is
- Afraid to share
- The question references journey but some have 'set up house' and aren't going anywhere
- Baptism testimonies are good examples of this

#72
- Relevant to today's sermon

#80
- Without close relationships you don't share
- Broad category
- Surprised to see this low bar as I am not hearing negatives
- Ok to disagree

- Sometimes make a decision not to go to someone because grace applied
- We as Christians may not go to other wish disagreements, sometimes because we prefer to extend them grace
- There would be a difference between going to someone in leadership with a disagreement vs. going to another lay person with a disagreement (not sure which was more easy to do, after the discussion)

#90
- Thinking about mostly formal groups but not necessarily Life Group - examples Choir/Orchestra
- Trust happens over time
- Confidentiality is critical - remind my group of this
- I feel welcome and embraced
- Prayer list sent after group meeting referencing confidentiality
- Group is open and have shared together for a long time
- Takes time to build up trust
- Ensure there is a discussion on confidentiality within the group
- I trust them that they will continue to pray for me

Experience of Intimacy

#30
- This is a church culture thing – is it an expectation/goal for the church?
- A prayer service during the church demonstrates how we care for one another
- "Why would I burden someone with my problems?"
- Seniors – you just don't share your feelings
- Conversation ends at 'hello'
- Prayed for at Communion was good
- We all come with needs (caring for each other is important)
- What is the expectation? Is it reasonable to that 1000 people will all share openly
- Generational thing - older people keep things to themselves and don't always share
- Depends on the personal problem
- Share with specific people but not with just anyone
- If I don't know people I won't share

#41
- "Thankometer" is a big expression
- Happens in conversation
- Inside and outside of WH
- "Thankometer" provides baby-step for this

#55
- Freedom to ask for prayer
- Easily ask
- With people I serve with
- I have a 'text' group for this
- Good to be told that you are being prayed for

#61
- Some read this questions as pastors caring for pastors, and therefore didn't have an opinion

#61
- Correlates to sharing or not sharing - they share if they know them
- Left this blank as I felt it pertained to Pastors
- Too new to know
- Left blank

General consensus, small groups are working well.

It appears that when participants responded to questions within the context of small groups, relational experiences were strong, but this does not transcend to the larger church body.

Based on comments, a large majority of the survey participants are involved in small groups (Life Groups/ministry groups) where trust and intimacy is strong. It doesn't appear that relationship building goes beyond the small clusters. What strategies can be explored for building relations across groups and be inclusive of those not in small groups?

Experience of Hope

#13

- Do I really know?
- Seem to enjoy but I don't know
- If I am not directly involved in a ministry I don't know
- Those we see we would rate a enjoying

#45 and #33

- Nodding and agreement

#68

- "Firmly believe" was hard to swallow. "I believe, but do I firmly believe?"
- Higher based on building/fund raising
- Faith issue
- "Firmly" speaks of confidence
- Surprised not higher
- Question uses strong language

#75

- Some comments with respect to lack of relationships outside the church. Strategy to expand relations beyond the small circle of church friends. How do we start expanding our circles within the safe confines of the church and expand outwards from there?
- With neighbours and family
- People were impressed that this and #33 were so high
- Who you know not just anyone
- Thinking about neighbours and family
- Viewed this as outside the church
- Surprised at how this is
- Chris will be thrilled and shocked to see how high this is
- Easy to become cloistered so have to be intentional
- In troubles you have opportunities to share (Stephen Ministry)

#88

- "Always" was hard to swallow.
- Needs to be unpacked because there is so much connected to going to church – family challenges, serving, etc.
- Personal preferences in worship will mean everyone will have a different response.
- One question I noted during the discussion on this question in the context of not enjoying the worship services: Are people volunteering to get out of the worship services because they're not enjoying them?
- Front of sanctuary vs. back of sanctuary vibe
- Depends on things like music, instruments, message - style, topic, length
- Varies week to week
- I always enjoy music and message
- Look forward to events
- Lee does a great job blending

- This is about expectation vs style
- It's about my mindset
- Not about us
- Phenomenal services

How to address/manage expectations? How to encourage people to come with an expectation of giving worship and not only receiving from the services?

Experience of Affirming

#15

- Most out of it at times when I don't really feel like being there
- It's a week to week thing
- Is there ever a negative influence?
- Could be negative if you don't want to be challenged
- Stories - intentionality

#16

- Serving not according to gifting
- I am invested in the ministries I serve in
- Always wanting to do more
- Volunteerism - do people know they are doing a great job?
- Some participants commented that they self-affirm, and some leaders affirm, however, there's still a strong need for affirmation from leadership. Strategy to share stories and demonstrate what's working well and give volunteers a pat on the back. How to highlight ministries that are excelling in affirmation and model the behavior?

#30

- Alter ministry was given as an example of providing an avenue to allow sharing personal issues in confidence. Build/expand this avenue to help foster connections and spiritual growth?

#35-#48-#83

- It appears participants need to see evidence of affirmation. How do we share the stories of those who are volunteering and doing a great job? What can be done practically to make volunteers feel more valued and appreciated? How to make volunteers feel that they matter and are making a valuable contribution to the overall success of the church? Do they see where they fit in the big picture?

#48

- Sharing of "stories" which point out others contributions are effective (eg. Baptismal testimony)

#83

- It is dangerous to start thanking people, because you will miss some
- Leaders don't know all of the stories, so don't know all that is going on
- Culture of volunteers - fly under the radar - who do you thank?
- Struggle to get people to volunteer
- Differences depending on leadership
- Lack of leadership in some areas
- Nice to be told you are doing a good job
- I am not doing it for thanks
- Nice but not required

Experience of Pastoral Care

#36

- Strategy to regularly highlight how the church is involved in outreach to the community and benevolence.

#39

- Is the need emotional or practical – because sometimes distance becomes an issue for practical
- Surprised how low
- Perspective in terms of what is practical
- Demographics may come in to play - age etc.

#44

- Can't form friendships
- New believer is key to the question
- Not easy to break in to a large church
- Some may not want to be welcomed in
- Discipleship is key here
- People have their needs met in different ways
- "Friends" should read "sense of belonging" to be easier to respond to
- The church is so big, that I don't know who is new
- How to help them – discover spiritual gift (through discipleship) so as to point them to that group?
- Go back to hospitality connections (previously done through Vicki)

Comments indicate that the participants were not feeling the love outside of their small circle of friends and definitely not feeling the love from leadership. It appears the need to belong either emotionally or practically is somewhat unmet.

Comments also made that the messages were over the head, difficult to understand for some of the consumers. How to structure the worship services to meet the needs of the consumer without compromising biblical principles (not being too seeker friendly).

Experience of Joy

#25

- Love to hear the sermons
- Long series makes it difficult to bring people
- Refreshing
- Biblical
- Too long
- Over my head
- Should be more seeker sensitive
- Lecture hall style not my thing
- Lacks the power of story
- ESL people find it very hard to understand
- The sermons are too long, lectures, too academic – too advanced for ESL & new Christians
- "How many times during the month can I bring a friend who would understand/relate?"
- Should move to more seek-friendly
- Add stories to services for identifying with one another
- Appreciate that we are Bible based

Wrap up comments:

- When someone leaves our church, do we do an exit survey?
- We should survey our community to find out what they think of our church

Suggestion made to incorporate story telling. How to encourage sharing testimonies of the goodness of God, share and celebrate answers to prayer?

Proposal for exit interviews to determine why people leave the church.

Issue with survey is that we are surveying people within the church - should ask people outside

- need to be sensitive to visual, hearing disabilities and also of ethnicity

APPENDIX C

(This appendix has been maintained in its original landscape format)

NCD REPORT 2023

West Highland Fellowship Baptist Church

April 2023

Pastor for 11 years: Chris Kovac

Profile	Date	Minimum Factor	Maximum Factor	Min-Max Difference	Average
2	Apr 2023	43 Loving Relationships	66 Holistic Small Groups	23	55
				Change 1 - 2	-2
1	Jan 2018	47 Loving Relationships	63 Need-oriented Evangelism	16	57

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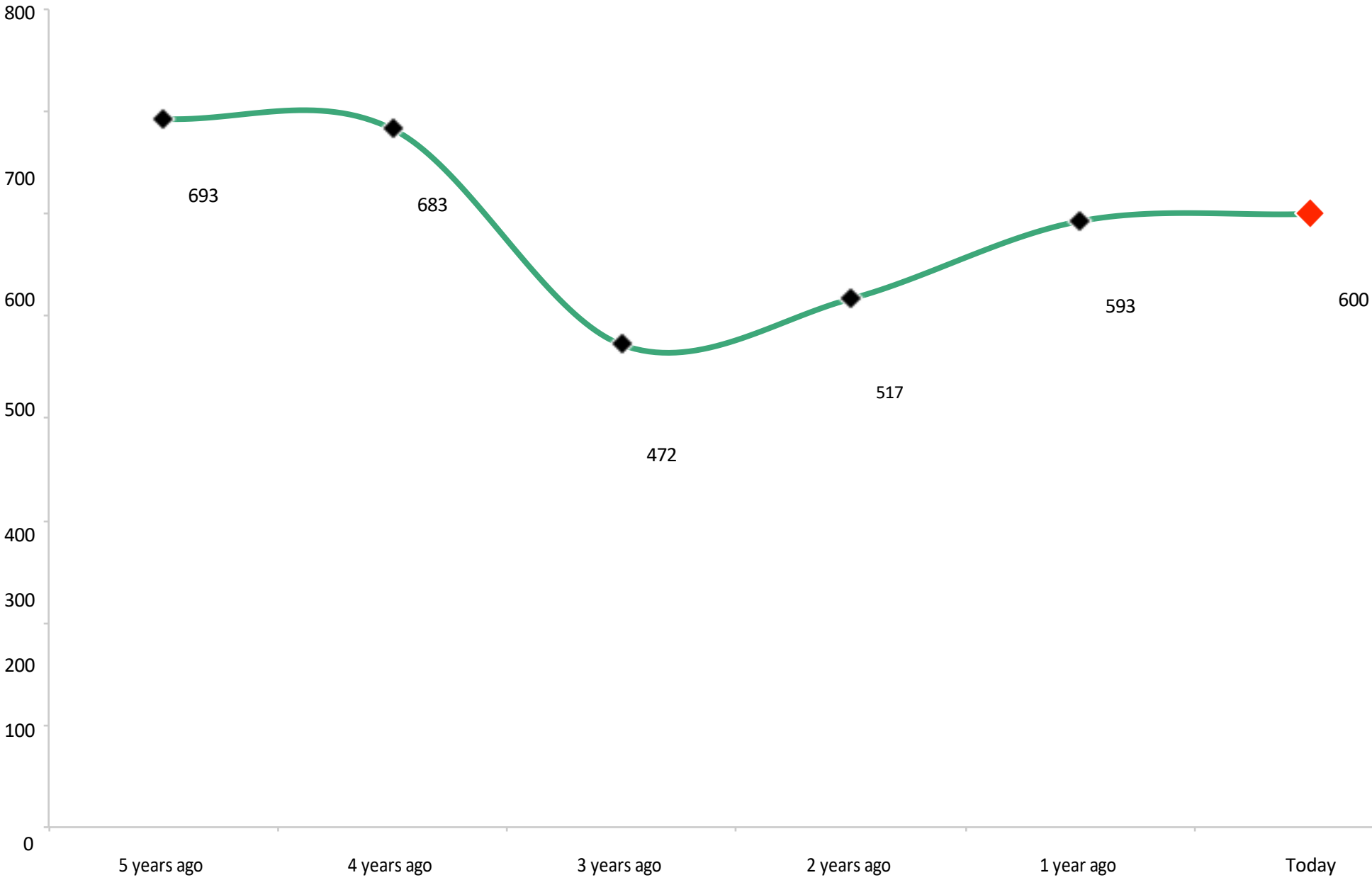
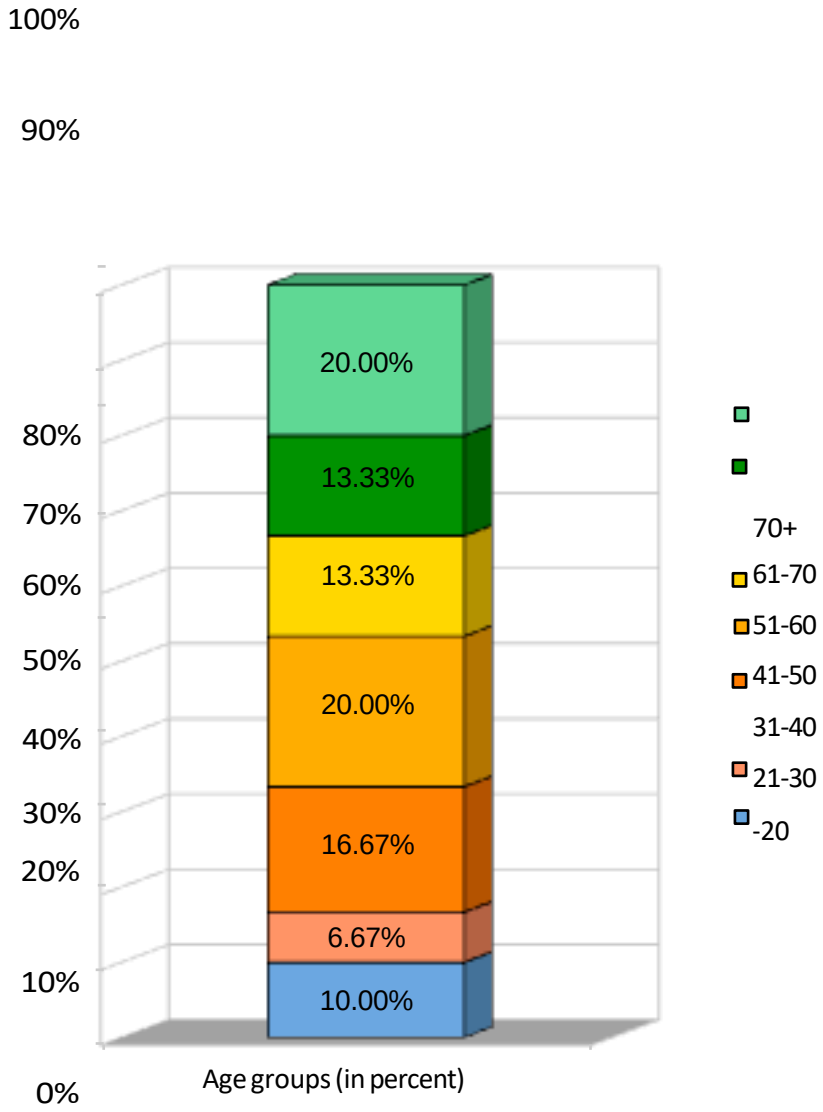
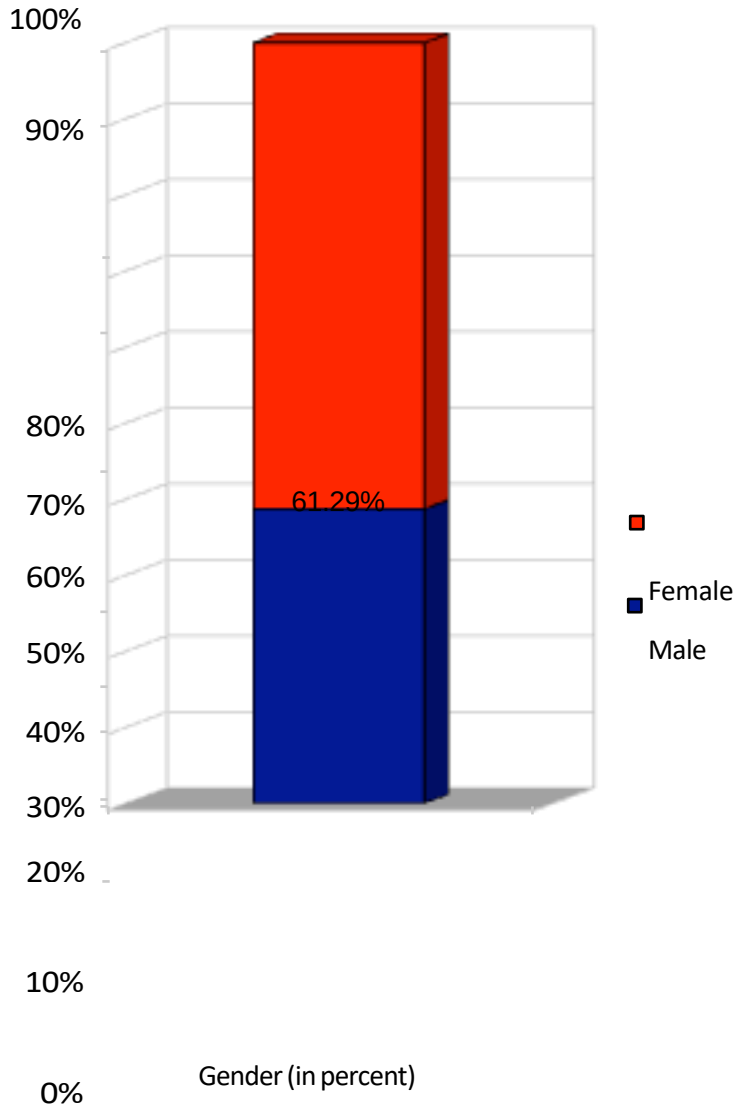
Adult attendance growth

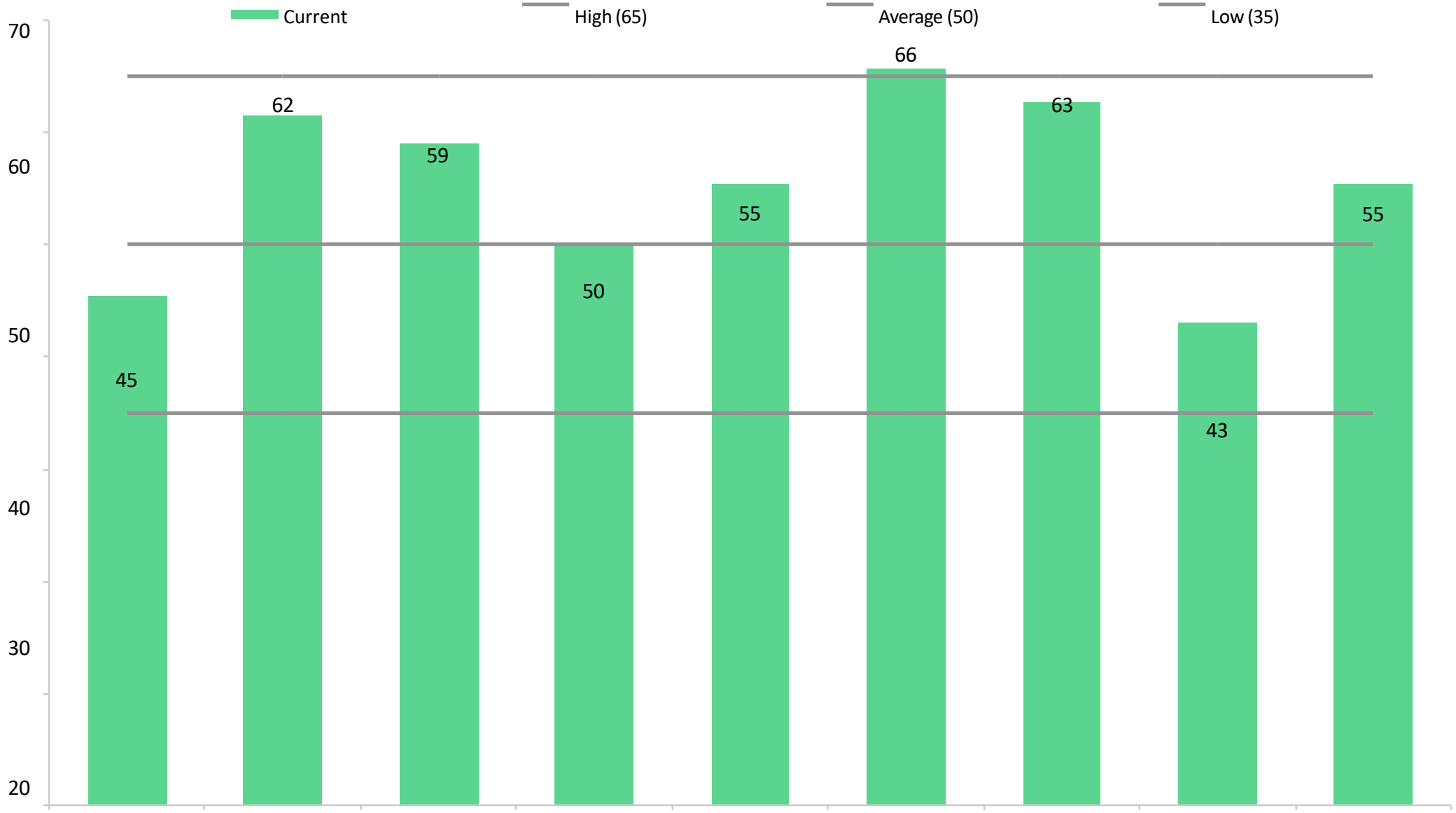


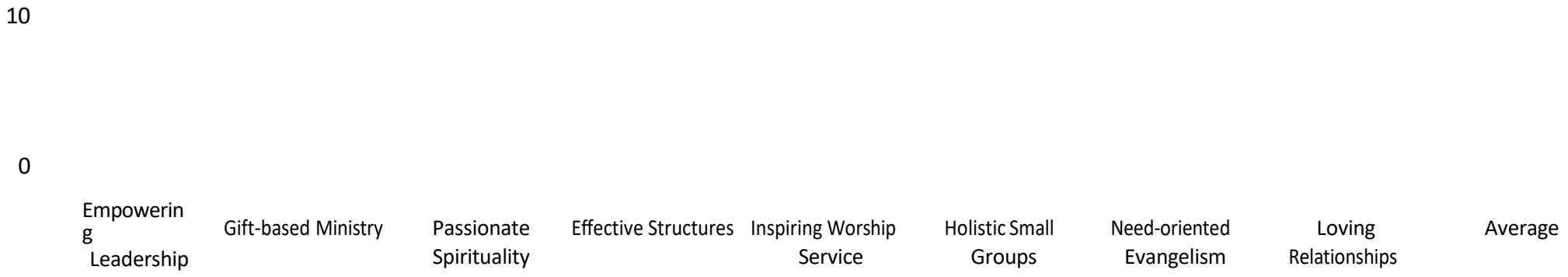
Survey participants by age groups and gender





Quality characteristic current profile

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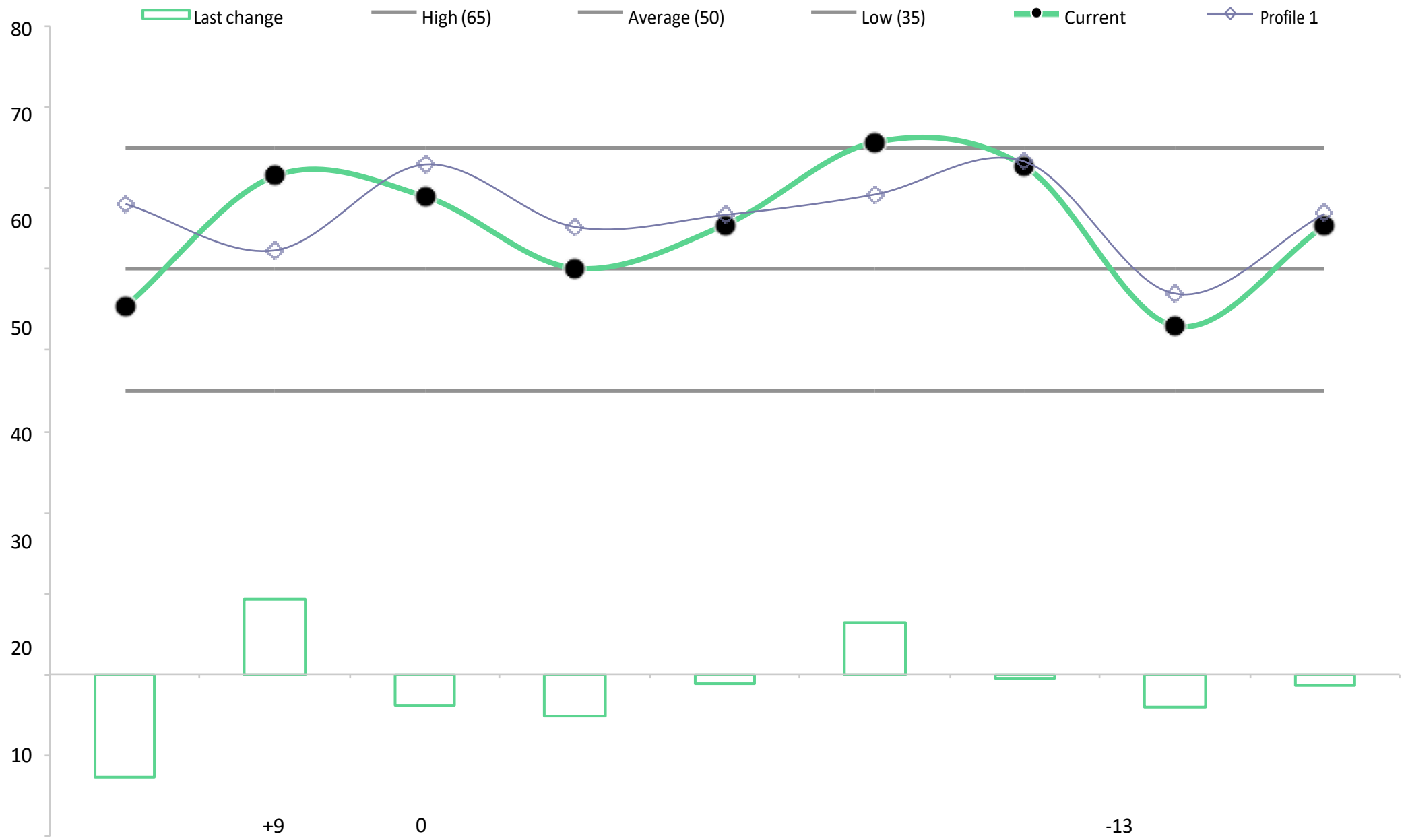
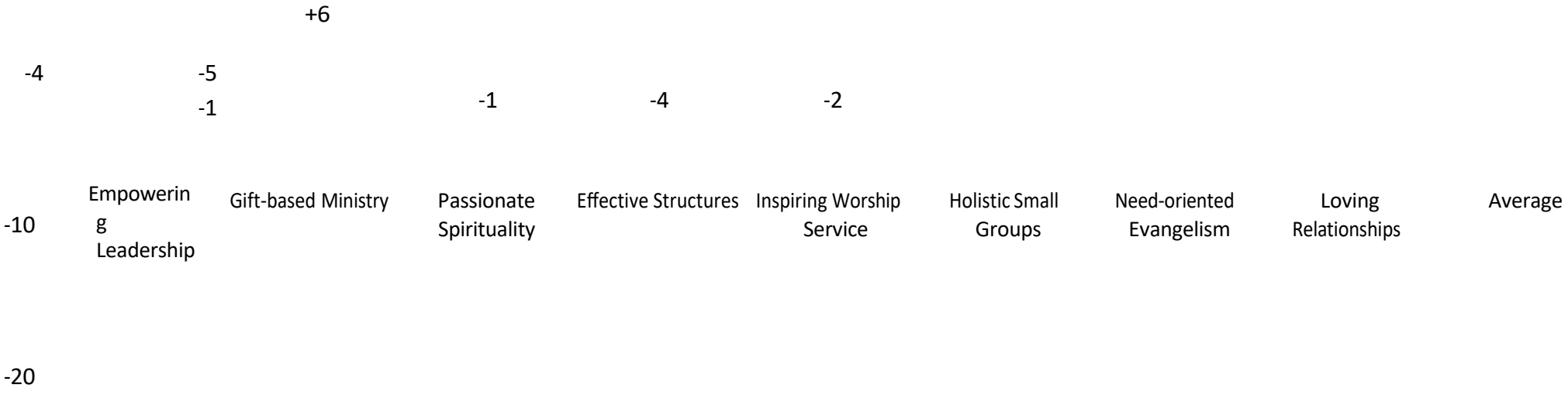
Empowering Leadership
Gift-based Ministry
Passionate Spirituality
Effective Structures
Inspiring Worship Service
Holistic Small Groups
Need-oriented Evangelism
Loving Relationships
Average

Dynamic progress

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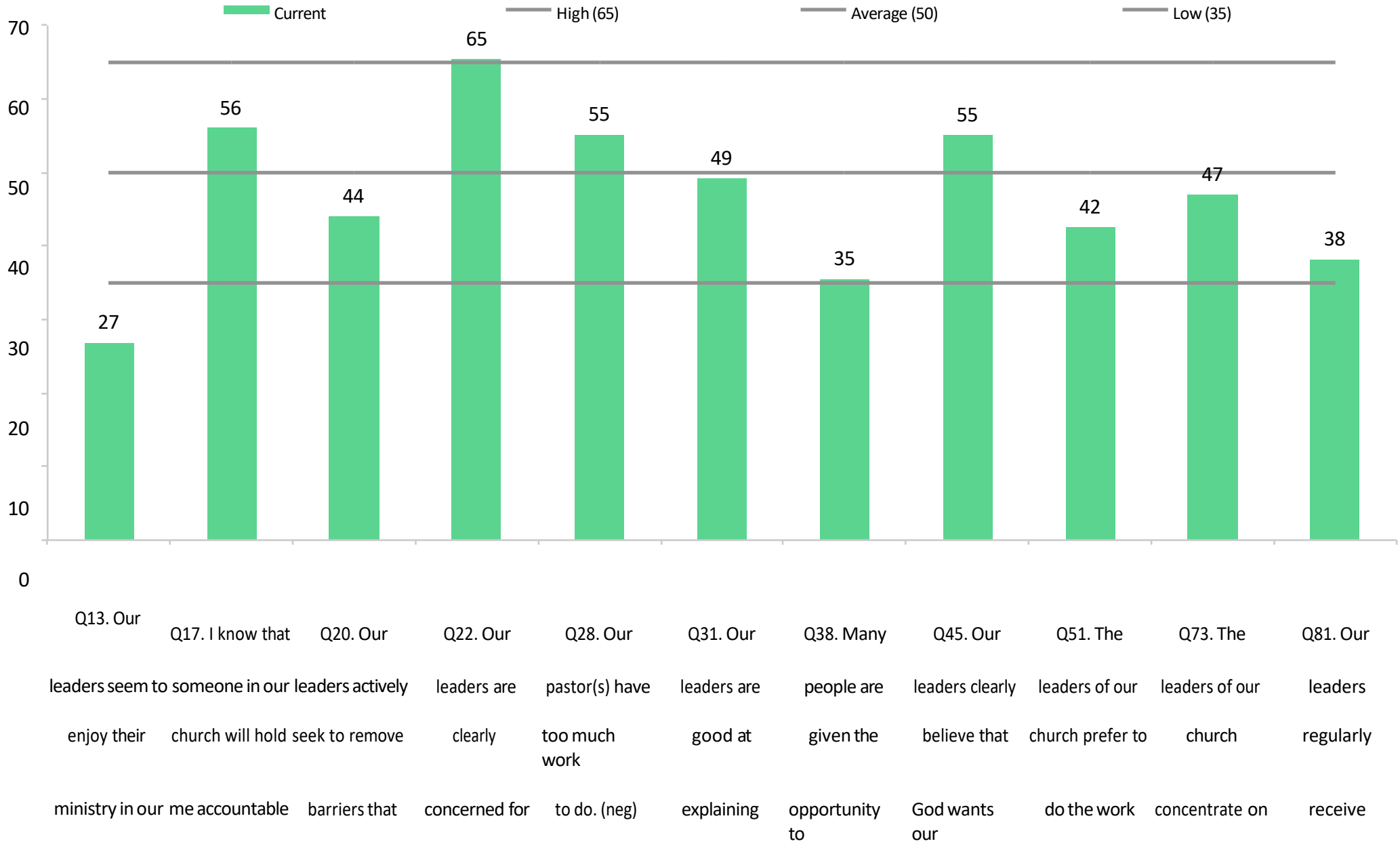
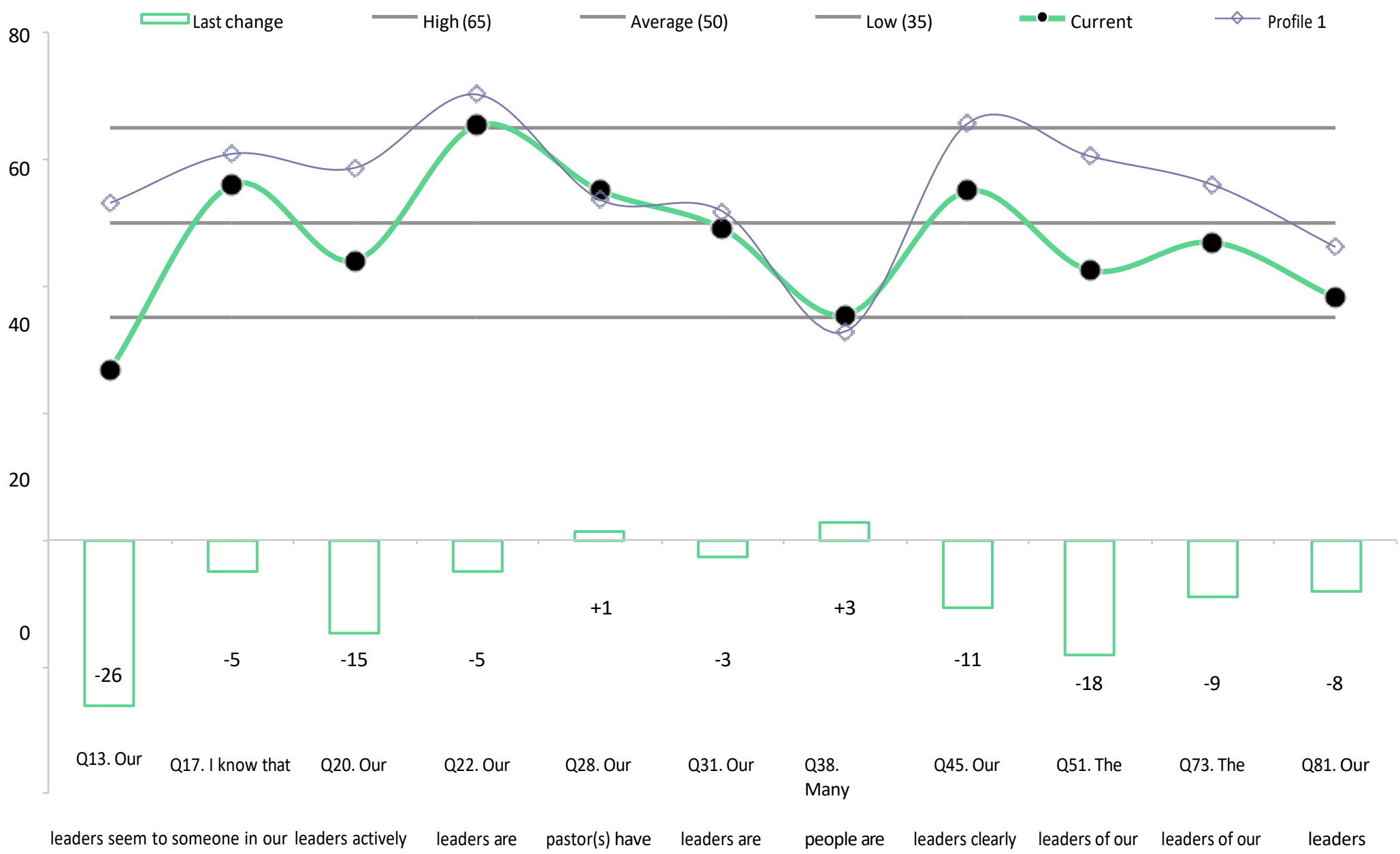
Empowering Leadership
Gift-based Ministry
Passionate Spirituality
Effective Structures
Inspiring Worship Service
Holistic Small Groups
Need-oriented Evangelism
Loving Relationships
Average

Empowering Leadership Current Profile



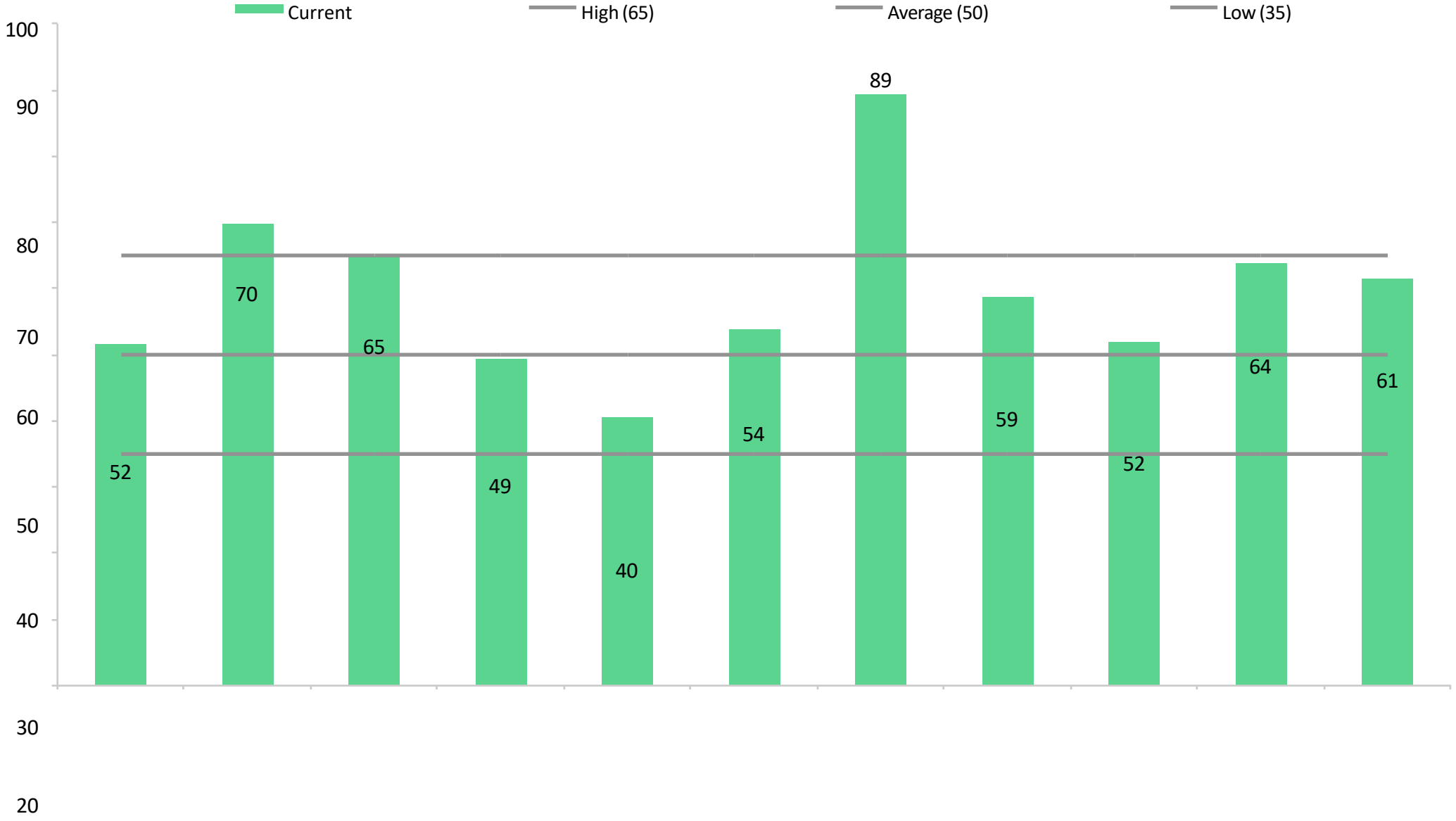
church.	for meeting the commitments I make.	limit my ministry.	people who do not know Jesus Christ.	things.	actively participate in our worship services.	church to grow.	themselves rather than collaborate with others. (neg)	the tasks for which they are gifted.	assistance from an outside person (e.g. coach, church consultant, other pastor, etc.) on how to develop our church.

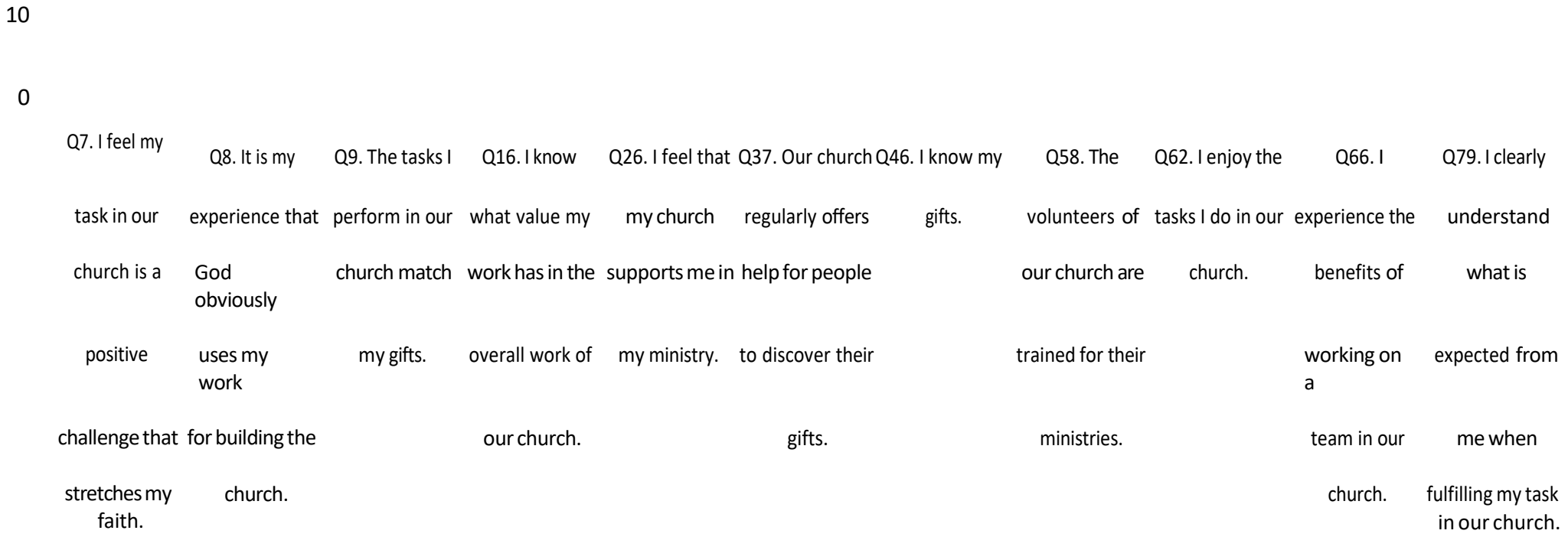
EL Dynamic progress



	enjoy their	church will hold	seek to remove	clearly	too much work	good at	given the	believe that	church prefer to	church	regularly
-20	ministry in our	me accountable	barriers that	concerned for	to do. (neg)	explaining	opportunity to	God wants our	do the work	concentrate on	receive
	church.	for meeting the commitments I make.	limit my ministry.	people who do not know Jesus Christ.		things.	actively participate in our worship services.	church to grow.	themselves rather than collaborate with others. (neg)	the tasks for which they are gifted.	assistance from an outside person (e.g. coach, church consultant, other pastor, etc.) on how to develop our church.
-40											

Gift-based Ministry Current Profile

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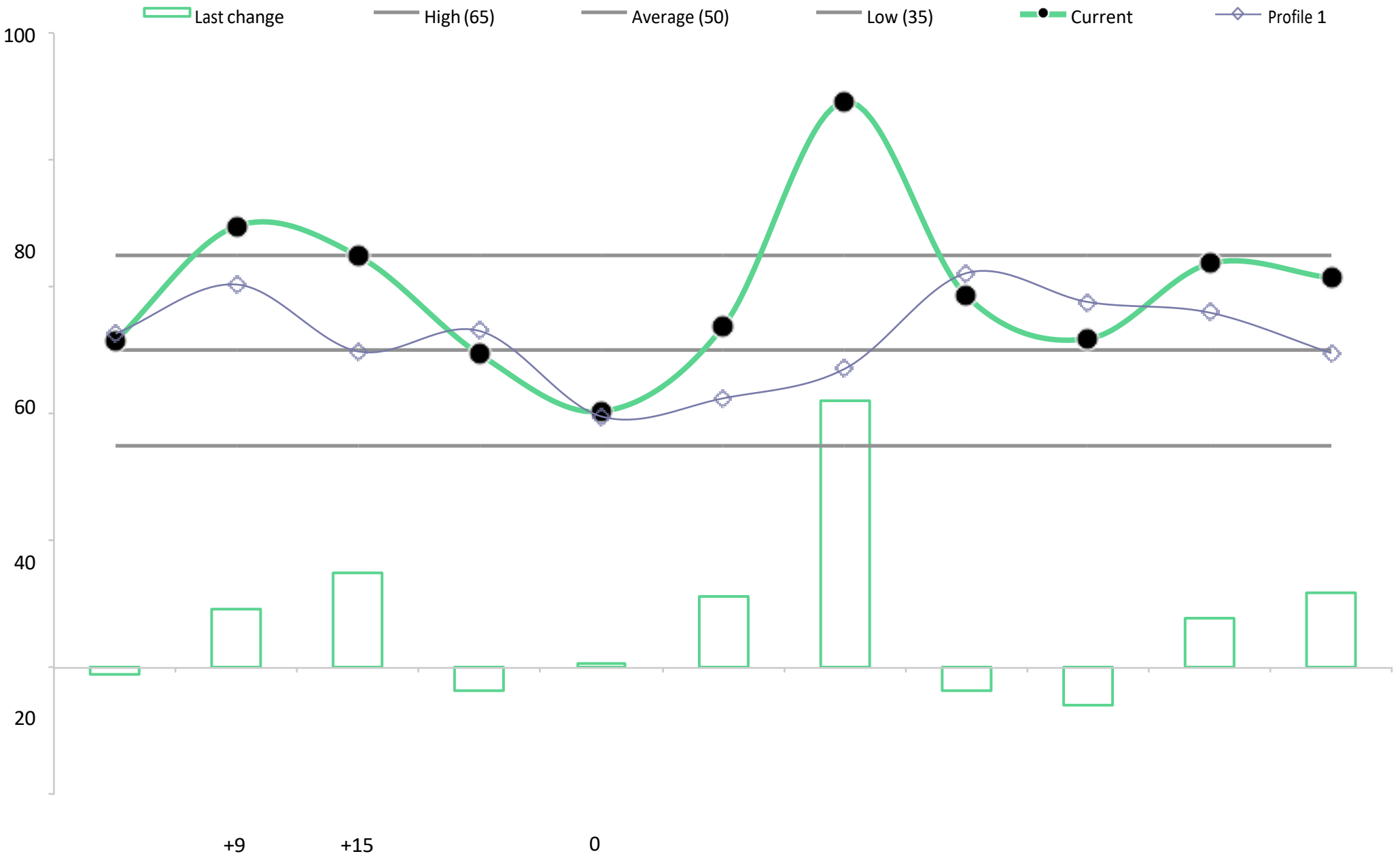
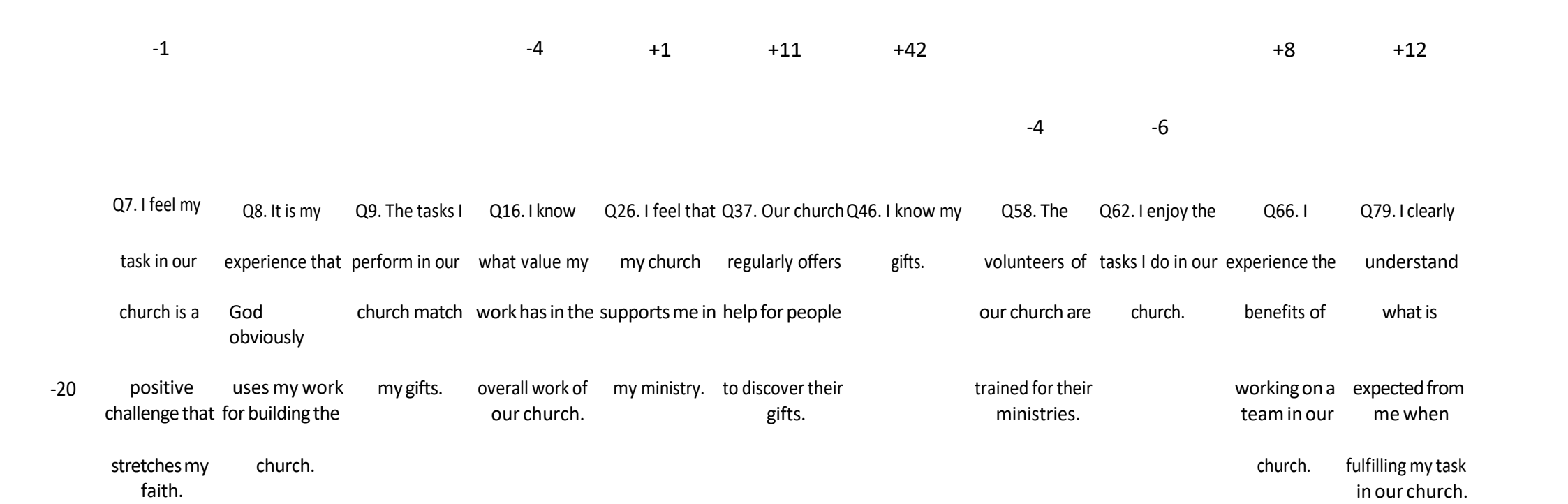
Q7. I feel my task in our church is a positive challenge that stretches my faith.
Q8. It is my experience that God obviously uses my work for building the church.
Q9. The tasks I perform in our church match my gifts.
Q16. I know what value my work has in the overall work of our church.
Q26. I feel that my church supports me in my ministry.
Q37. Our church regularly offers help for people to discover their gifts.
Q46. I know my gifts.
Q58. The volunteers of our church are trained for their ministries.
Q62. I enjoy the tasks I do in our church.
Q66. I experience the benefits of working on a team in our church.
Q79. I clearly understand what is expected from me when fulfilling my task in our church.

GbM Dynamic progress

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Q7. I feel my task in our church is a positive challenge that stretches my faith.
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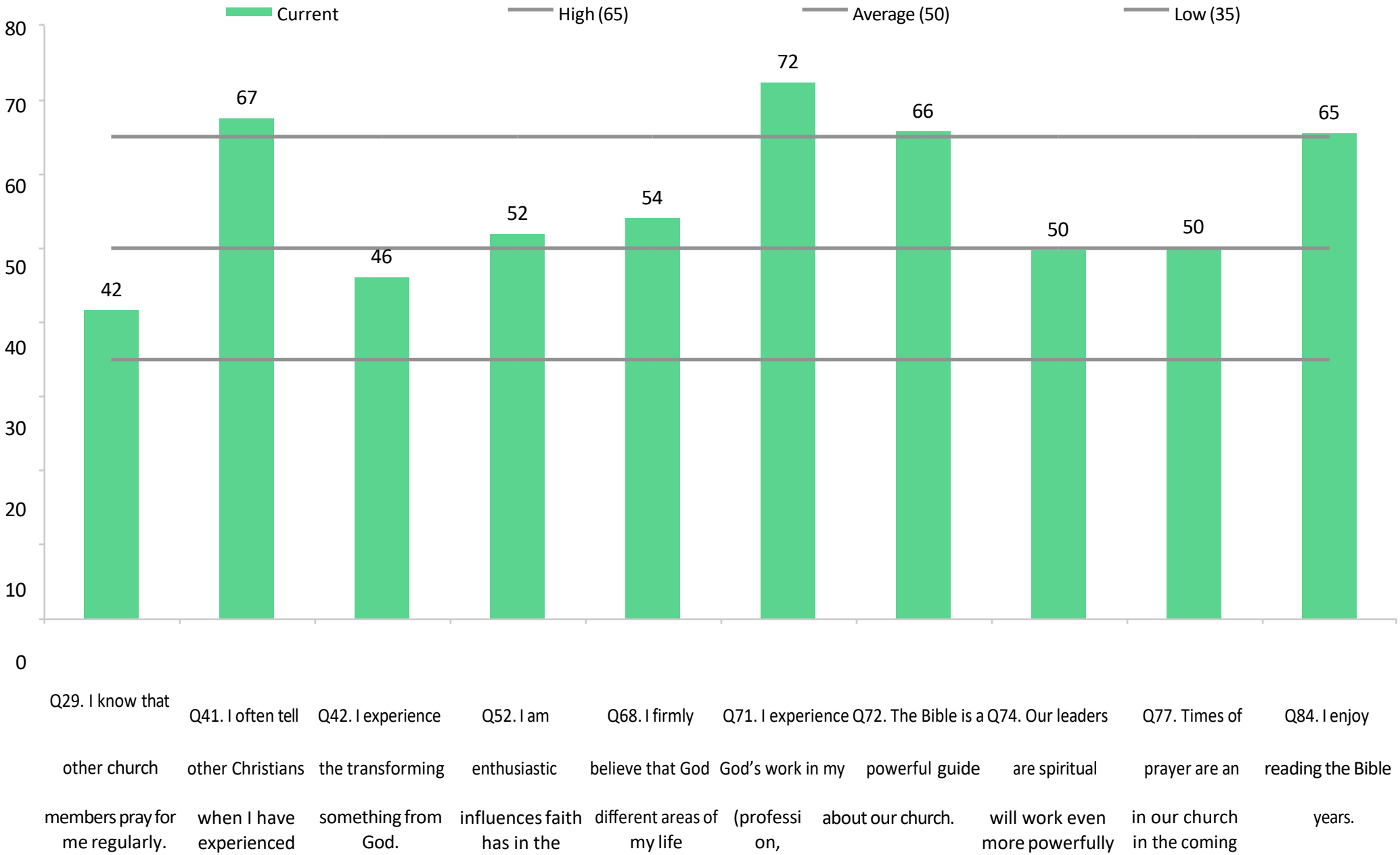
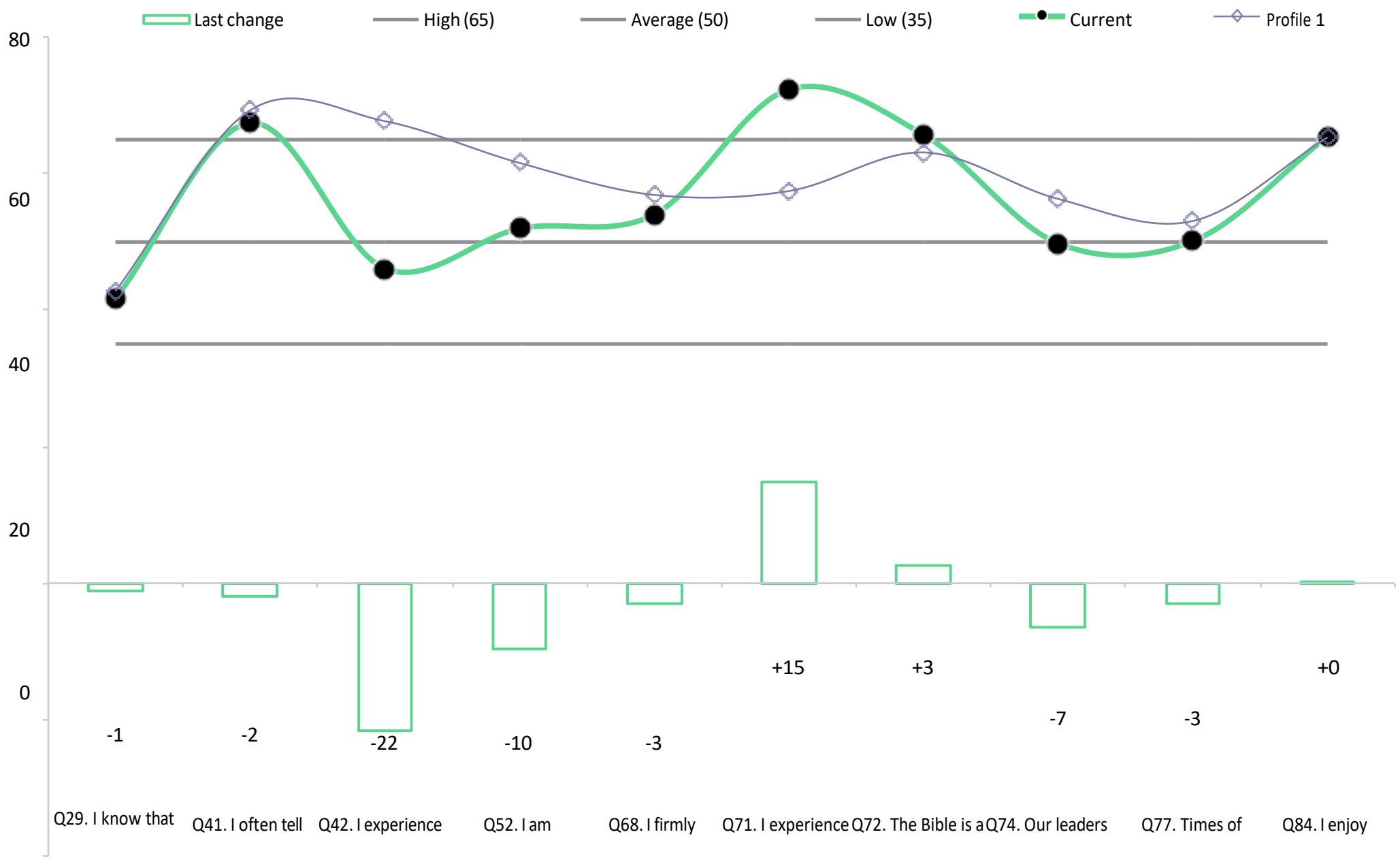
Passionate Spirituality Current Profile



life.	for me in the decisions of everyday life.	examples to me.	inspiring experience for me.	on my own.

family, spare time, etc).

PS Dynamic progress



other church members pray for me regularly.

other Christians when I have experienced something from God.

the transforming influences faith has in the different areas of my life (profession, family, spare time, etc).

enthusiastic about our church.

believe that God will work even more powerfully in our church in the coming years.

God's work in my life.

powerful guide for me in the decisions of everyday life.

are spiritual examples to me.

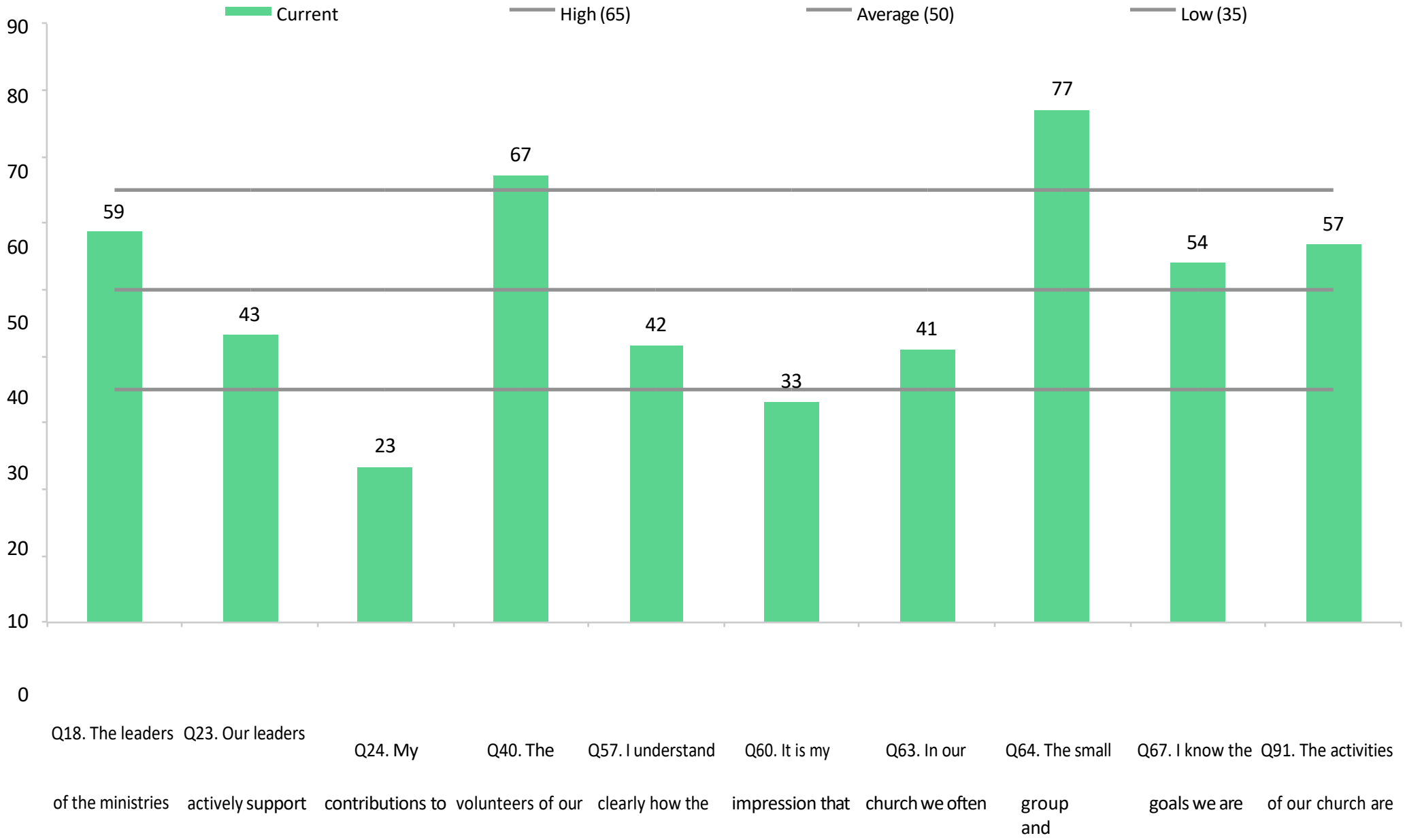
prayer are an inspiring experience for me.

reading the Bible on my own.

-20

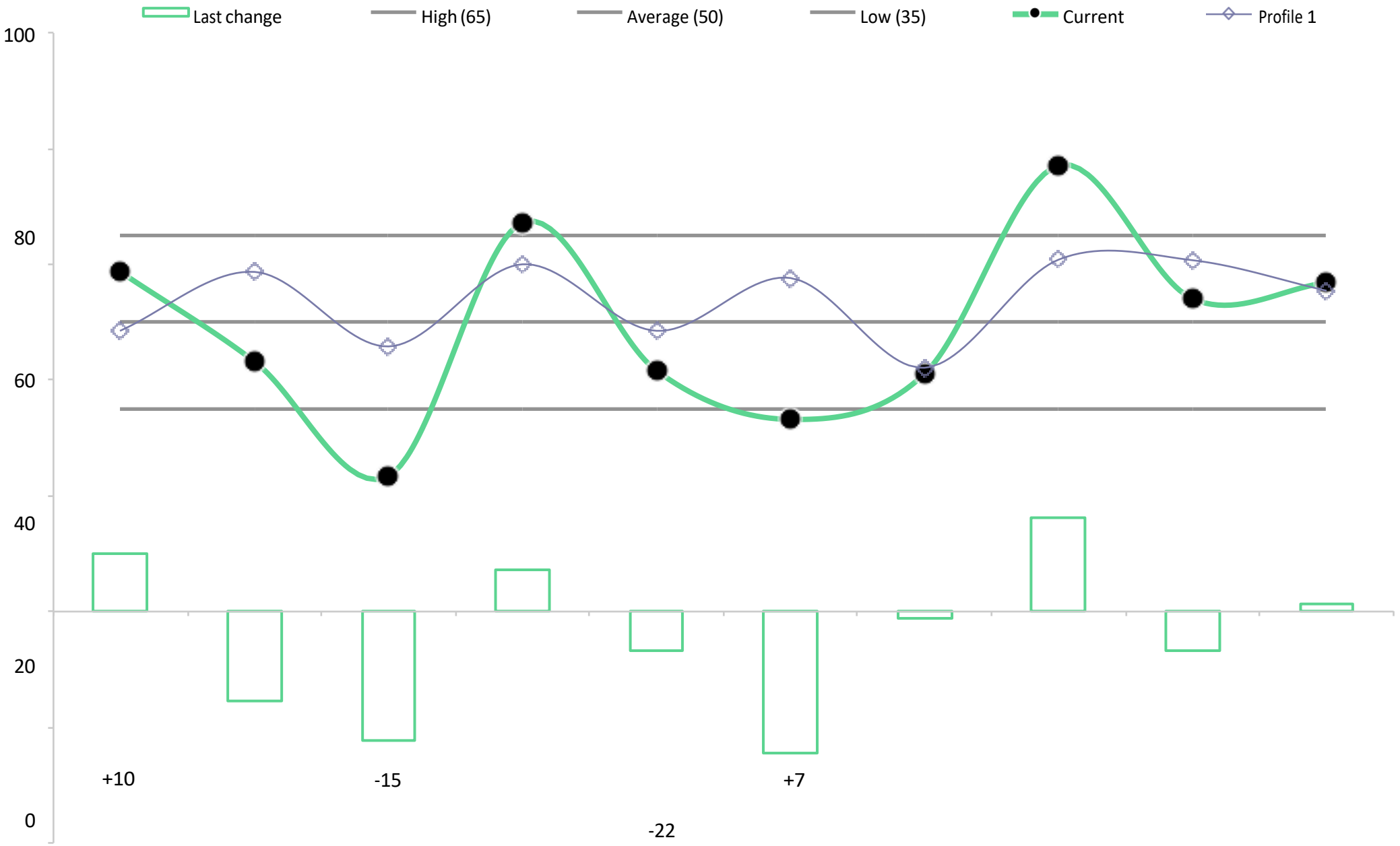
-40

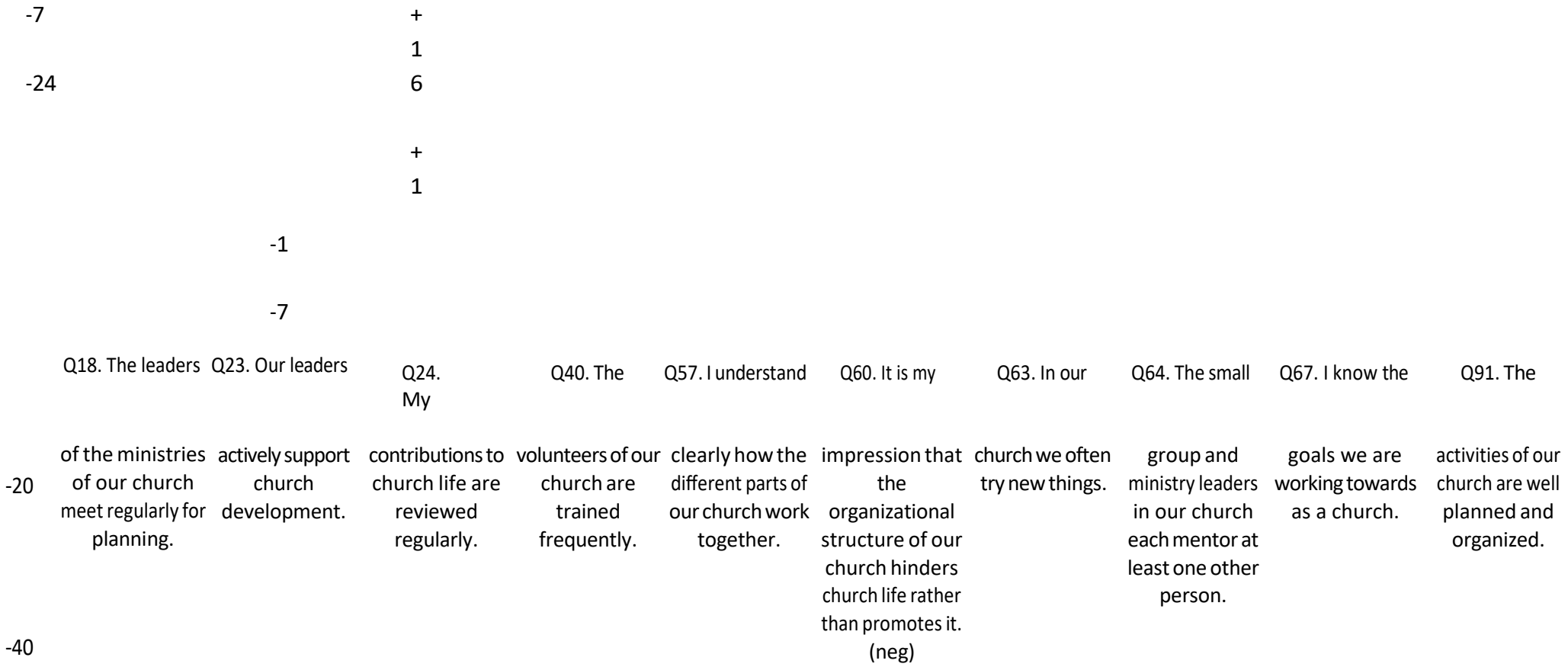
Effective Structures Current Profile



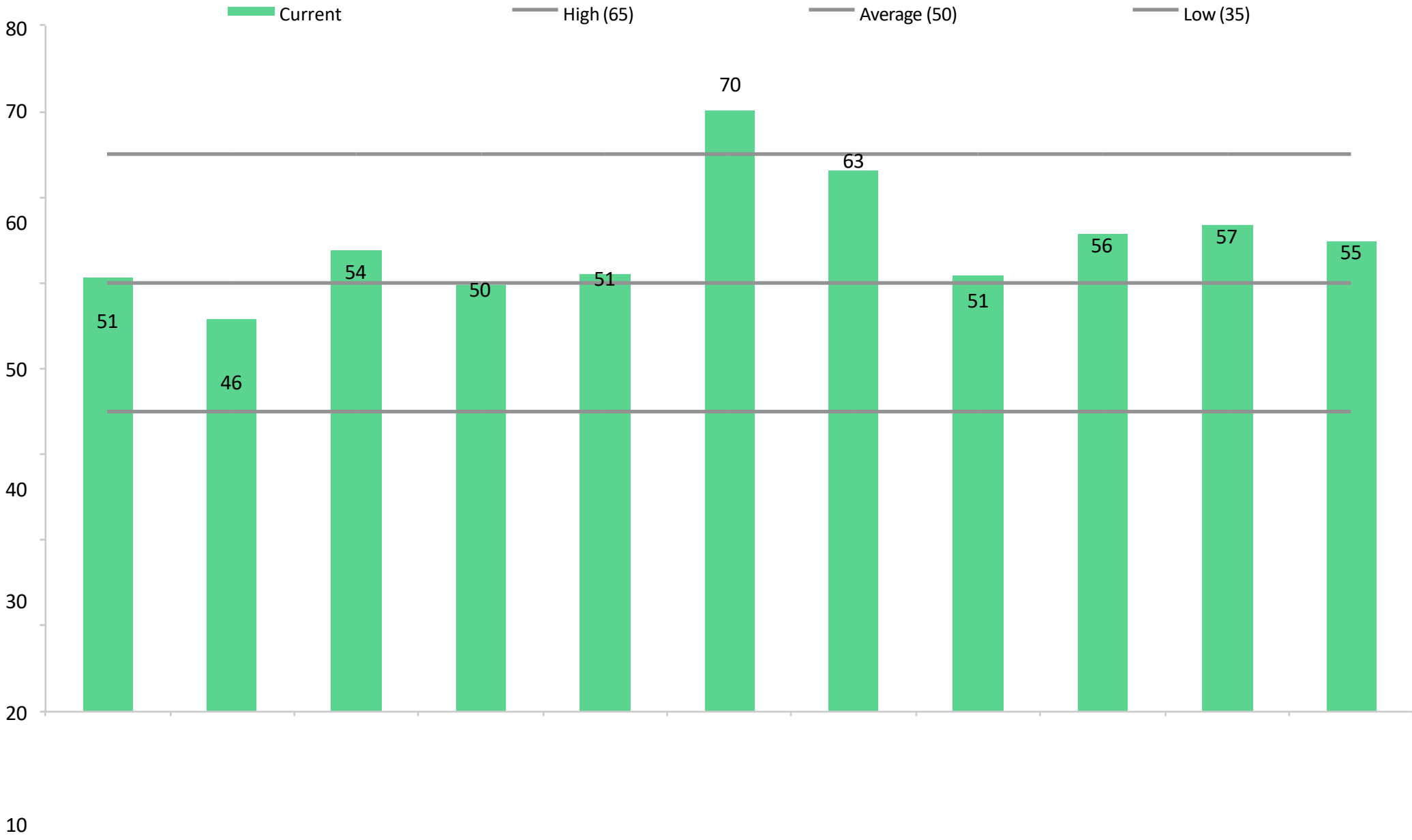
of our church	church	church life are	church are	different parts of	the	try new things.	ministry leaders	working towards	well planned and
meet regularly for planning.	development.	reviewed regularly.	trained frequently.	our church work together.	organizational structure of our church hinders church life rather than promotes it. (neg)		in our church each mentor at least one other person.	as a church.	organized.

ES Dynamic progress



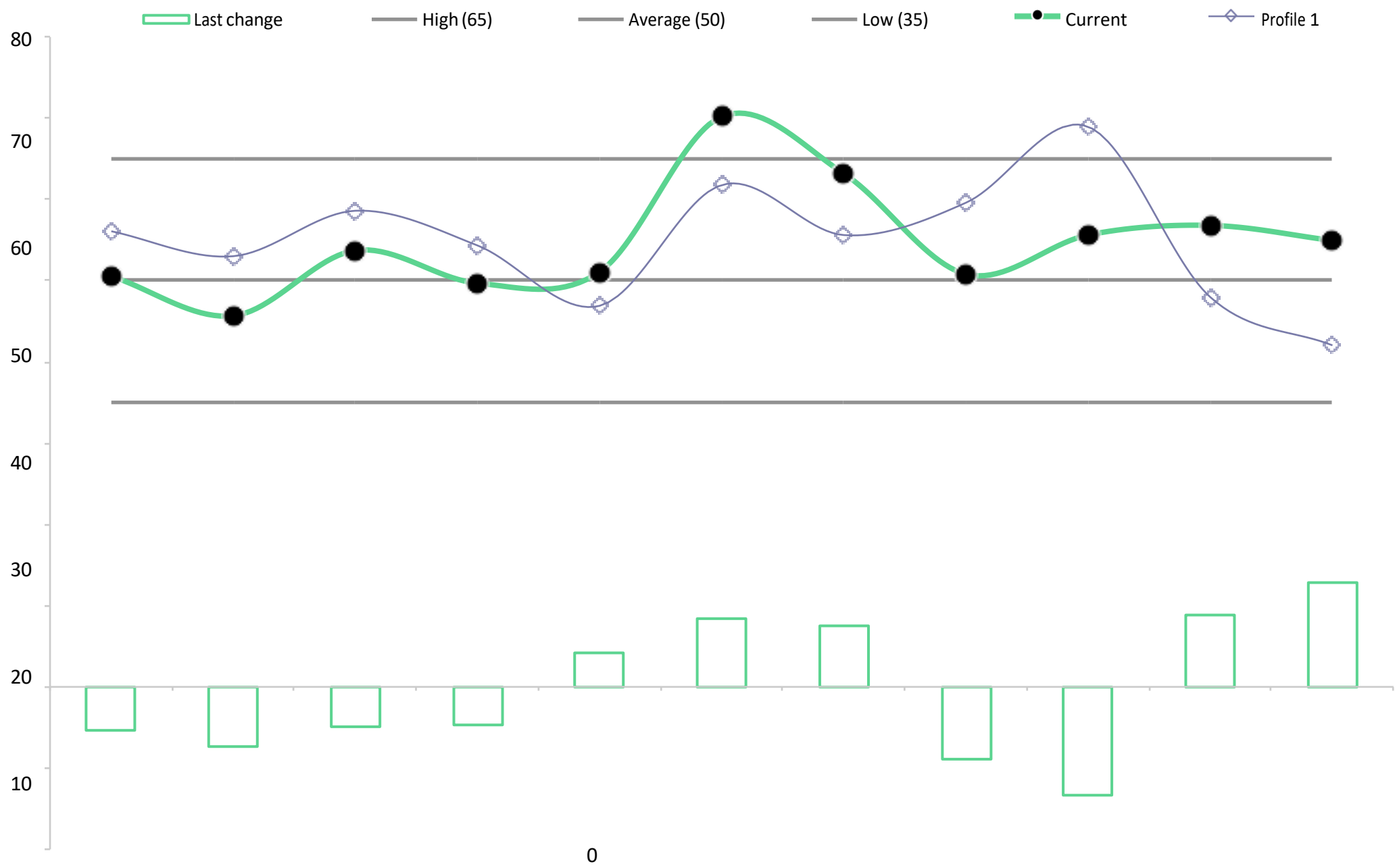

-7
+
1
-24
6
+
1
-1
-7
-20
-40
Q18. The leaders of the ministries of our church meet regularly for planning.
Q23. Our leaders actively support church development.
Q24. My contributions to church life are reviewed regularly.
Q40. The volunteers of our church are trained frequently.
Q57. I understand clearly how the different parts of our church work together.
Q60. It is my impression that the organizational structure of our church hinders church life rather than promotes it. (neg)
Q63. In our church we often try new things.
Q64. The small group and ministry leaders in our church each mentor at least one other person.
Q67. I know the goals we are working towards as a church.
Q91. The activities of our church are well planned and organized.

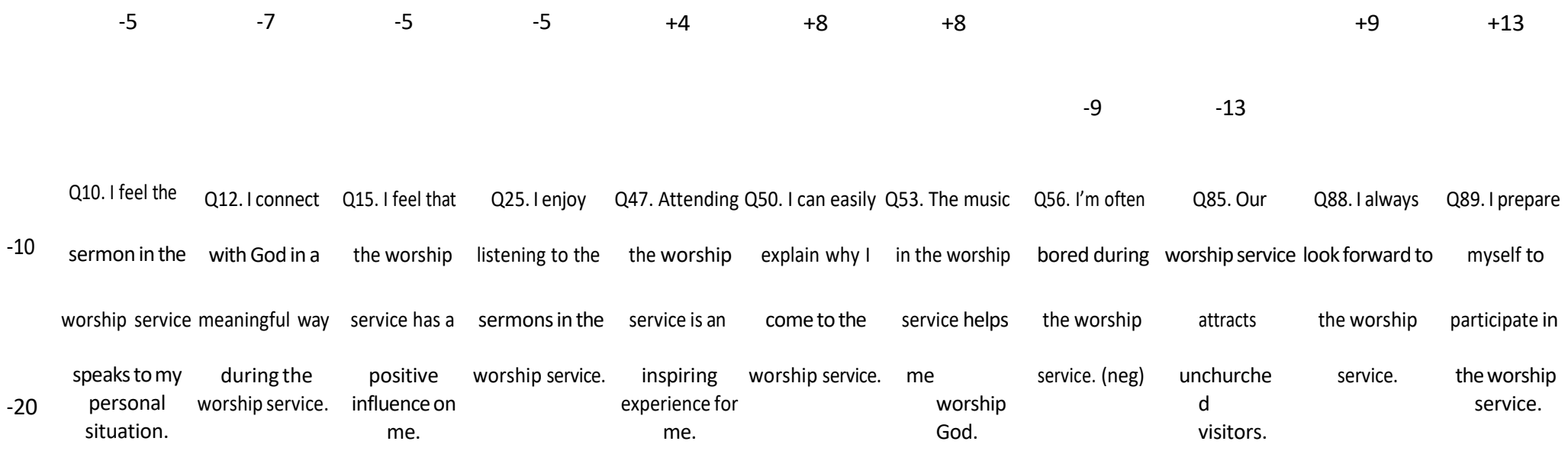
Inspiring Worship Service Current Profile



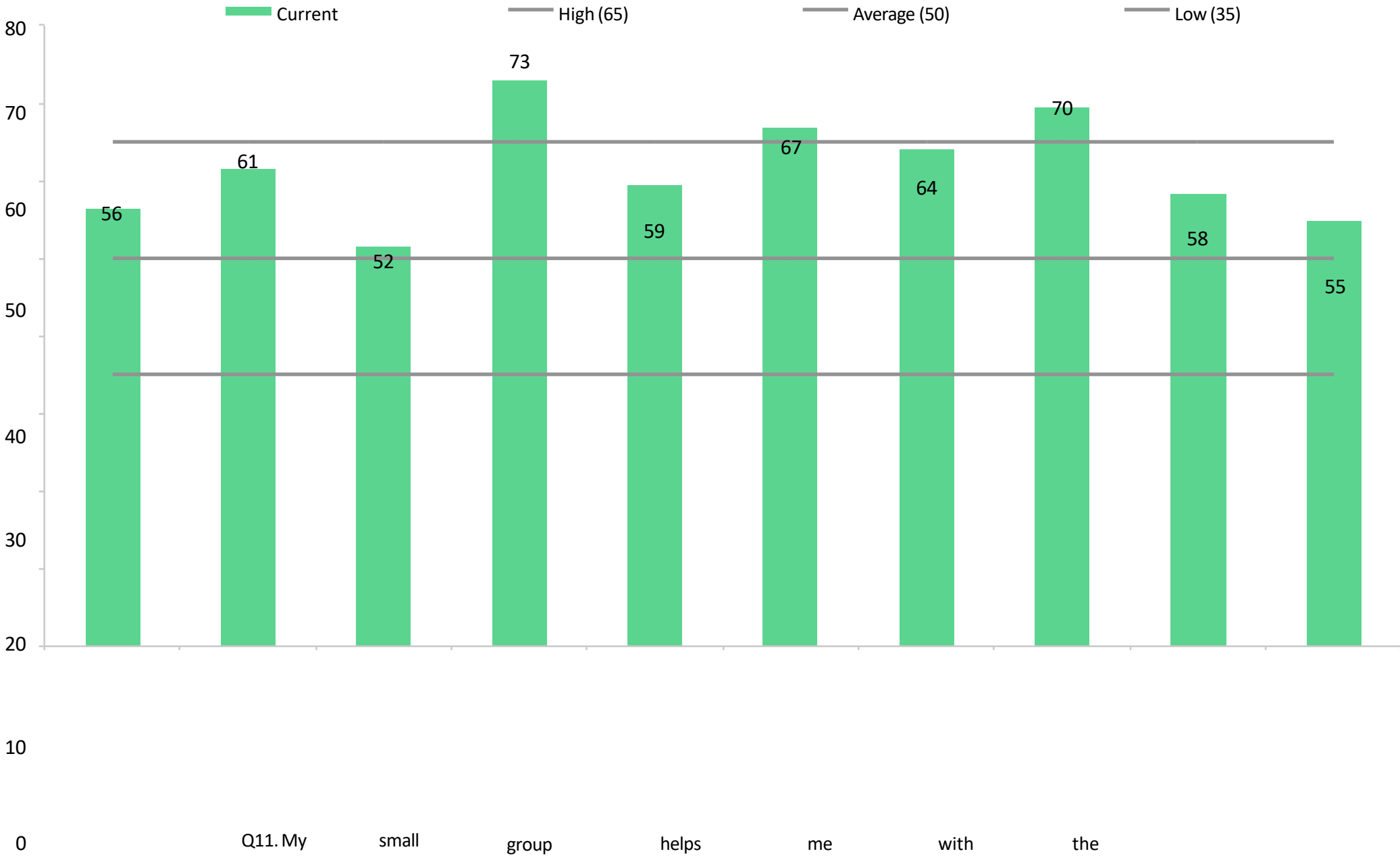
Q10. I feel the sermon in the worship service speaks to my personal situation.	Q12. I connect with God in a meaningful way during the worship service.	Q15. I feel that the worship service has a positive influence on me.	Q25. I enjoy listening to the sermons in the worship service.	Q47. Attending the worship service is an inspiring experience for me.	Q50. I can easily explain why I come to the worship service.	Q53. The music in the worship service helps me worship God.	Q56. I'm often bored during the worship service. (neg)	Q85. Our worship service attracts unchurched visitors.	Q88. I always look forward to the worship service.	Q89. I prepare myself to participate in the worship service.

IWS Dynamic progress



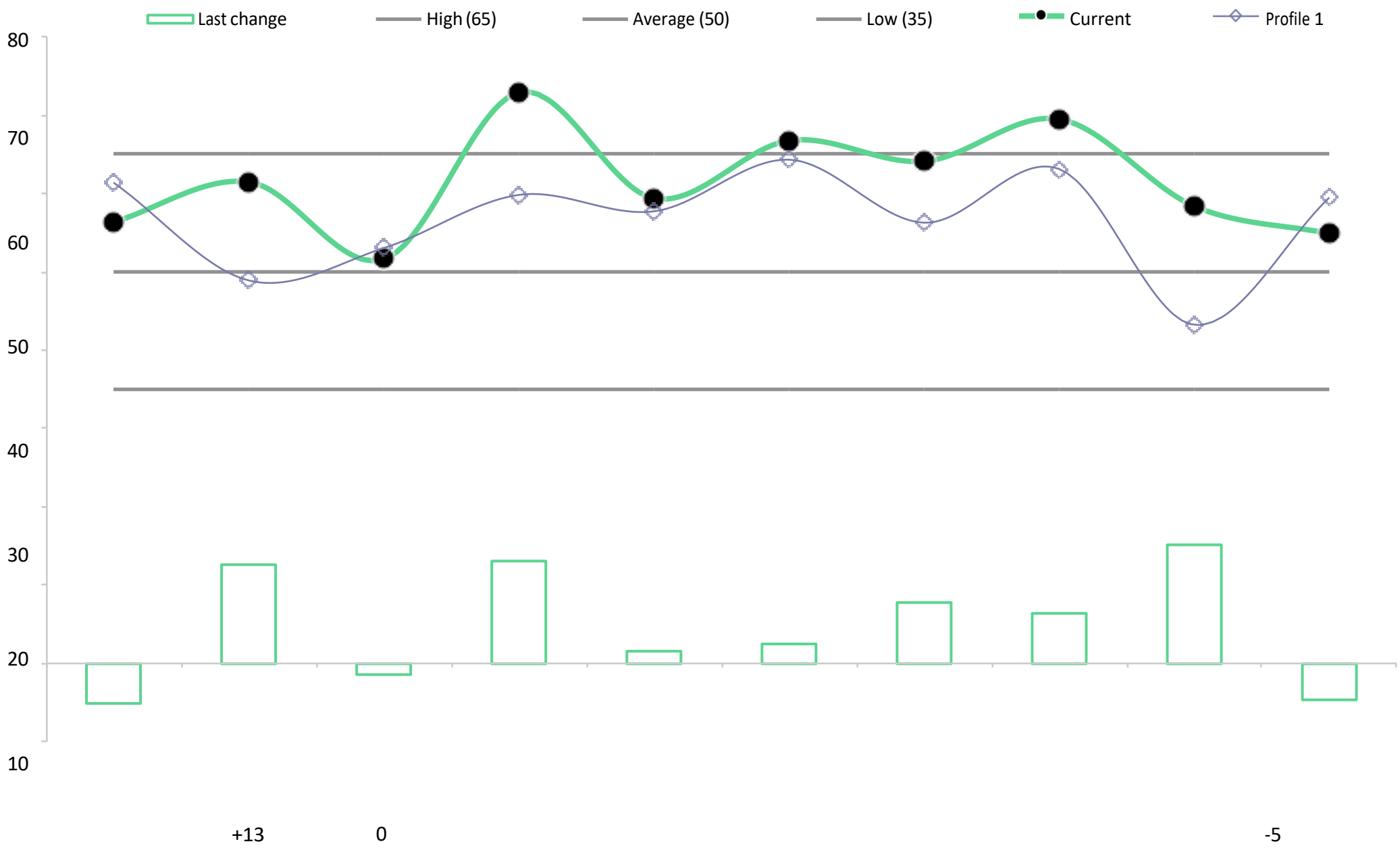

-5
-7
-5
-5
+4
+8
+8
+9
+13
-9
-13
-10
-20
Q10. I feel the sermon in the worship service speaks to my personal situation.
Q12. I connect with God in a meaningful way during the worship service.
Q15. I feel that the worship service has a positive influence on me.
Q25. I enjoy listening to the sermons in the worship service.
Q47. Attending the worship service is an inspiring experience for me.
Q50. I can easily explain why I come to the worship service.
Q53. The music in the worship service helps me worship God.
Q56. I'm often bored during the worship service. (neg)
Q85. Our worship service attracts unchurched visitors.
Q88. I always look forward to the worship service.
Q89. I prepare myself to participate in the worship service.

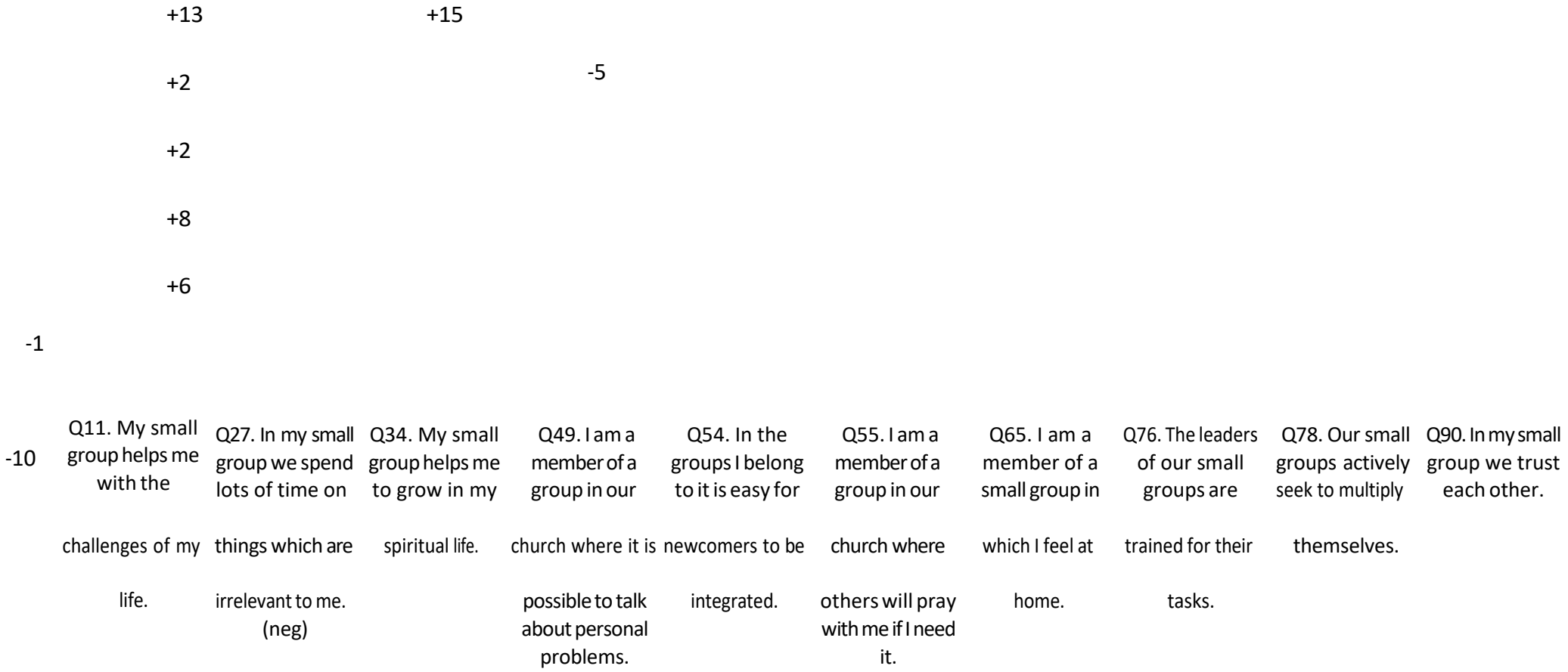
Holistic Small Groups Current Profile



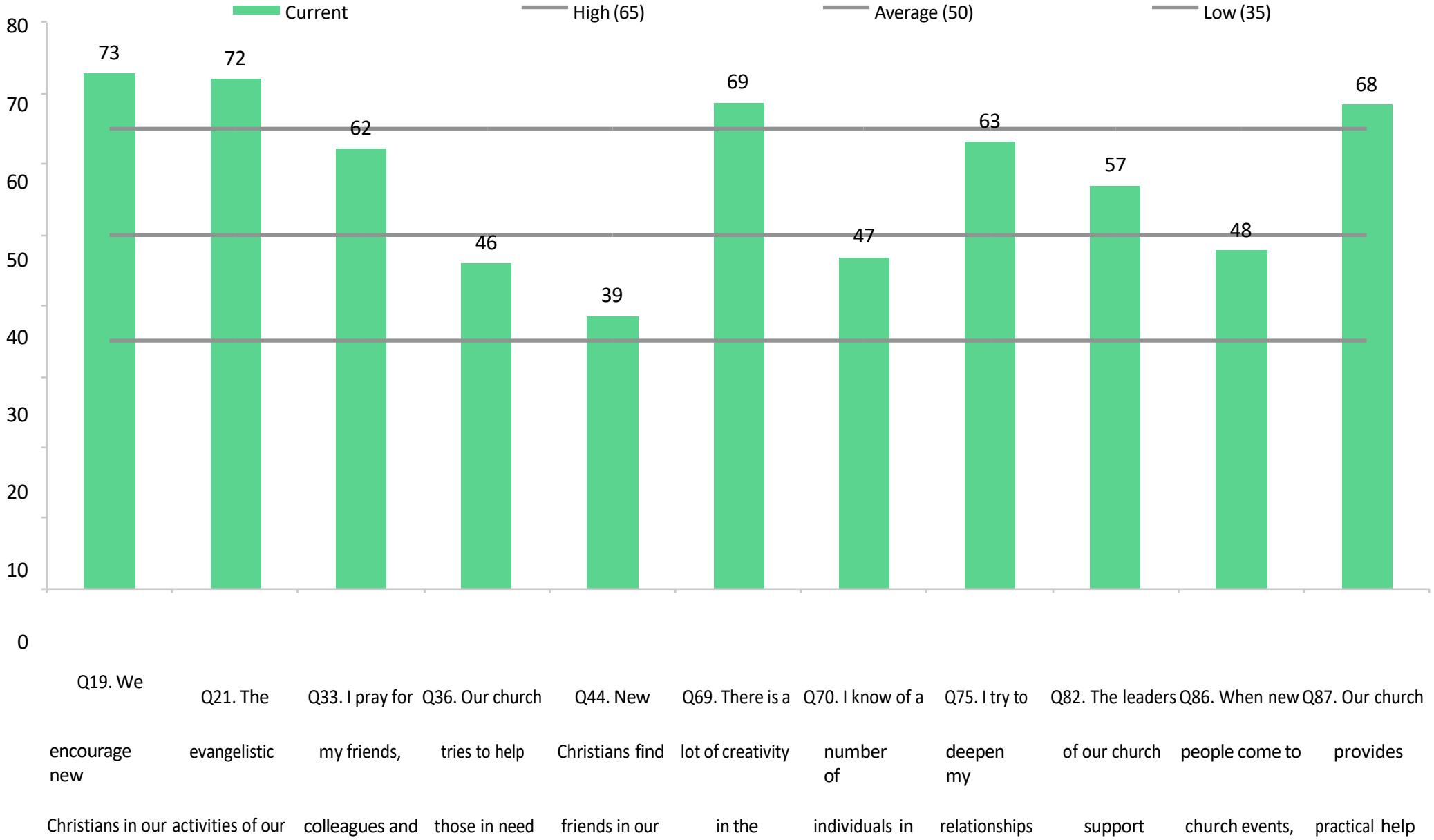
Q27. In my small group we spend lots of time on	Q34. My small group helps me to grow in my	Q49. I am a member of a group in our	Q54. In the groups I belong to it is easy for	Q55. I am a member of a group in our	Q65. I am a member of a small group in	Q76. The leaders of our small groups are	Q78. Our small groups actively seek to multiply	Q90. In my small group we trust each other.
challenges of my life.	things which are irrelevant to me. (neg)	spiritual life.	church where it is possible to talk about personal problems.	newcomers to be integrated.	church where others will pray with me if I need it.	which I feel at home.	trained for their tasks.	themselves.

HSG Dynamic progress



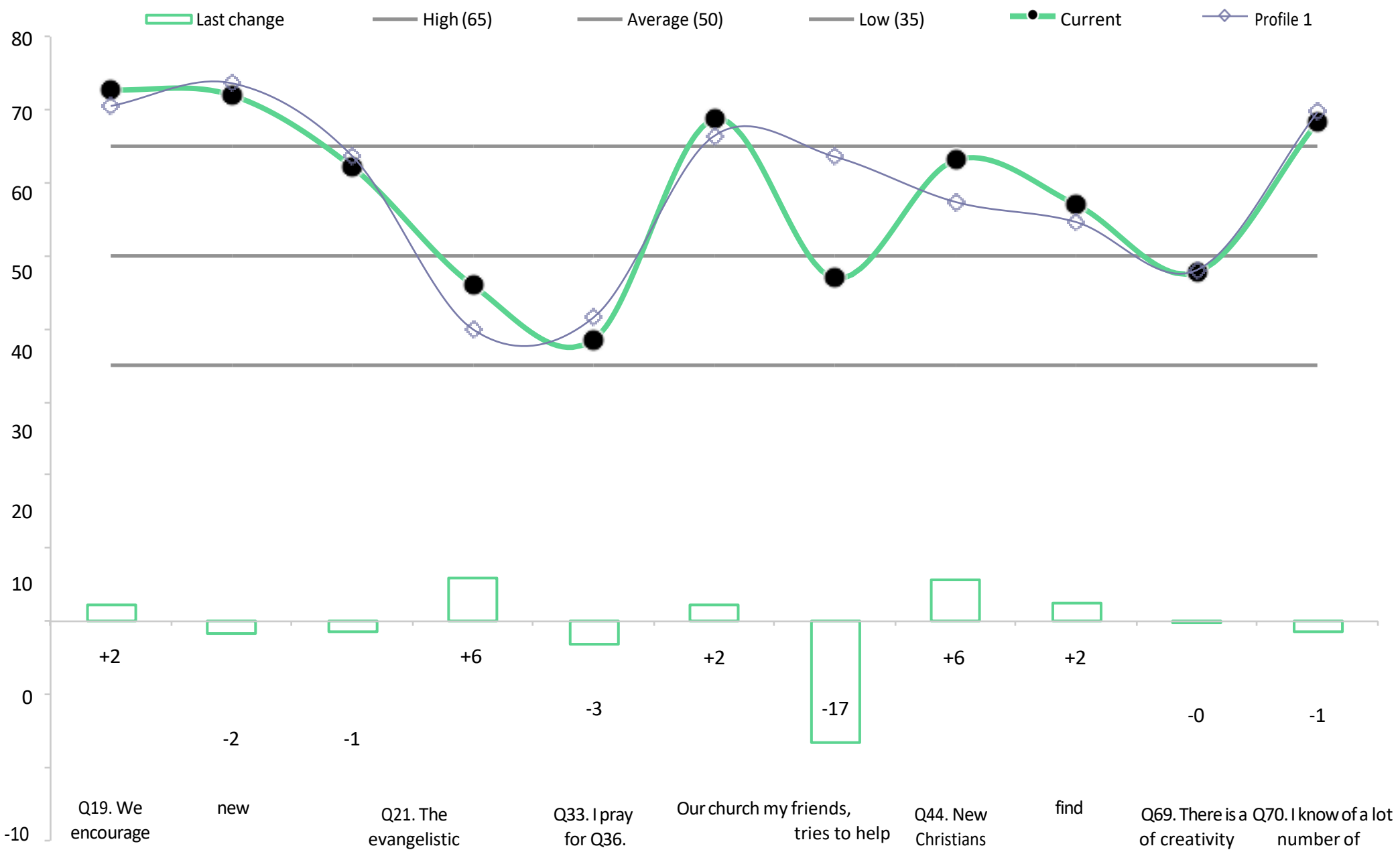

+13
+15
-5
+2
+2
+8
+6
-1
-10
Q11. My small group helps me with the challenges of my life.
Q27. In my small group we spend lots of time on things which are irrelevant to me. (neg)
Q34. My small group helps me to grow in my spiritual life.
Q49. I am a member of a group in our church where it is possible to talk about personal problems.
Q54. In the groups I belong to it is easy for newcomers to be integrated.
Q55. I am a member of a group in our church where others will pray with me if I need it.
Q65. I am a member of a small group in which I feel at home.
Q76. The leaders of our small groups are trained for their tasks.
Q78. Our small groups actively seek to multiply themselves.
Q90. In my small group we trust each other.

Need-oriented Evangelism Current Profile



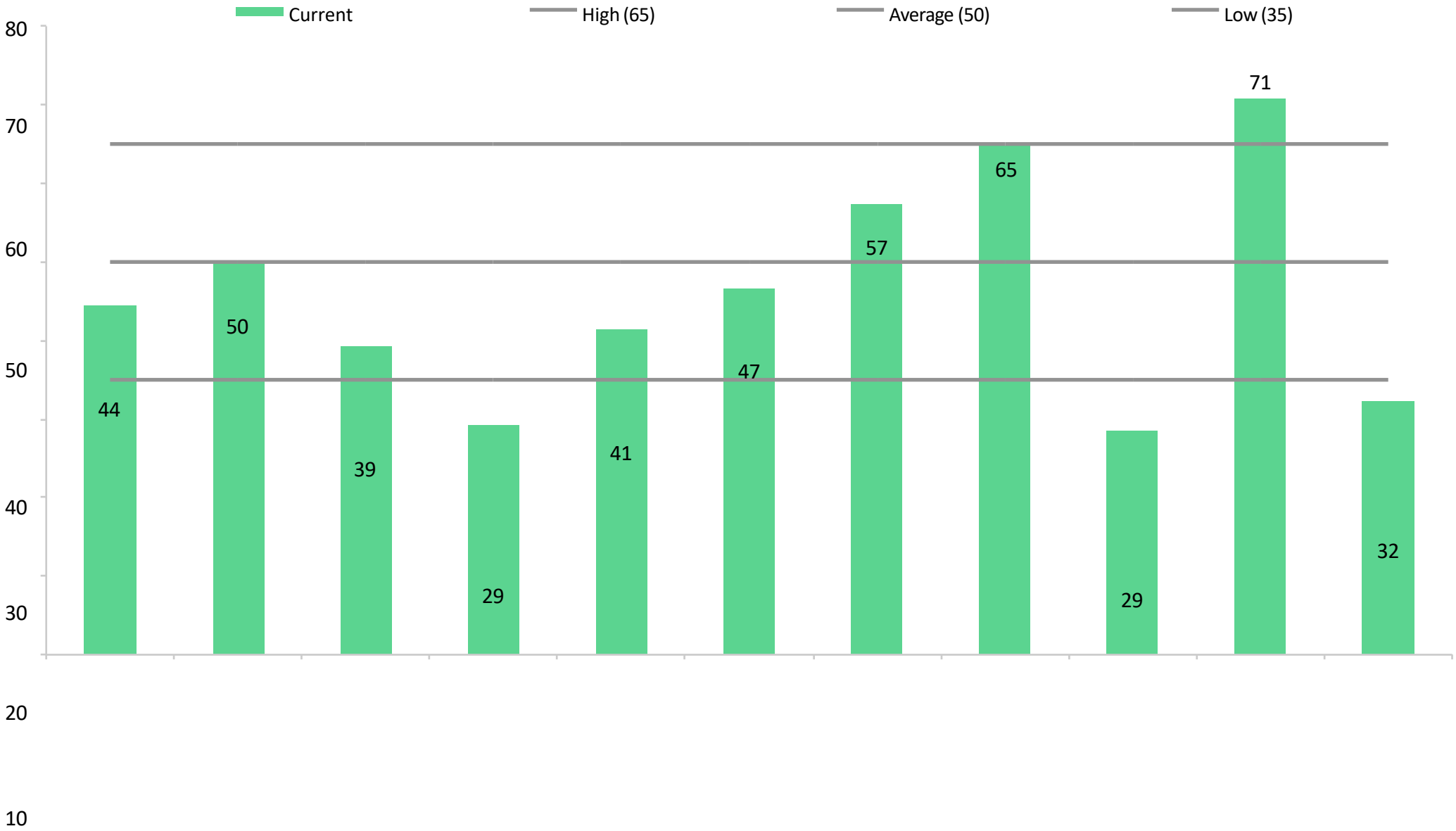
church to get involved in evangelism immediately.	church are relevant for my friends and family who do not yet know Jesus Christ.	relatives who do not yet know Jesus Christ, that they will come to faith.	(food, clothing, education, counsel, etc.).	church quickly.	evangelistic activities of our church.	our church who have the gift of evangelism.	with people who do not yet know Jesus Christ.	individual Christians in their evangelistic endeavors.	we approach them openly and lovingly.	for new Christians to grow in their faith.

NoE Dynamic progress



Q75. I try to deepen my	Q82. The leaders of our	Q86. When new	Q87. Our church people come to								
	Christians in our church to get involved in evangelism immediately.	activities of our church are relevant for my friends and family who do not yet know Jesus Christ.	colleagues and relatives who do not yet know Jesus Christ, that they will come to faith.	those in need (food, clothing, education, counsel, etc.).	friends in our church quickly.	in the evangelistic activities of our church.	individuals in our church who have the gift of evangelism.	relationships with people who do not yet know Jesus Christ.	church support individual Christians in their evangelistic endeavors.	church events, we approach them openly and lovingly.	practical help for new Christians to grow in their faith.
-20											
-30											

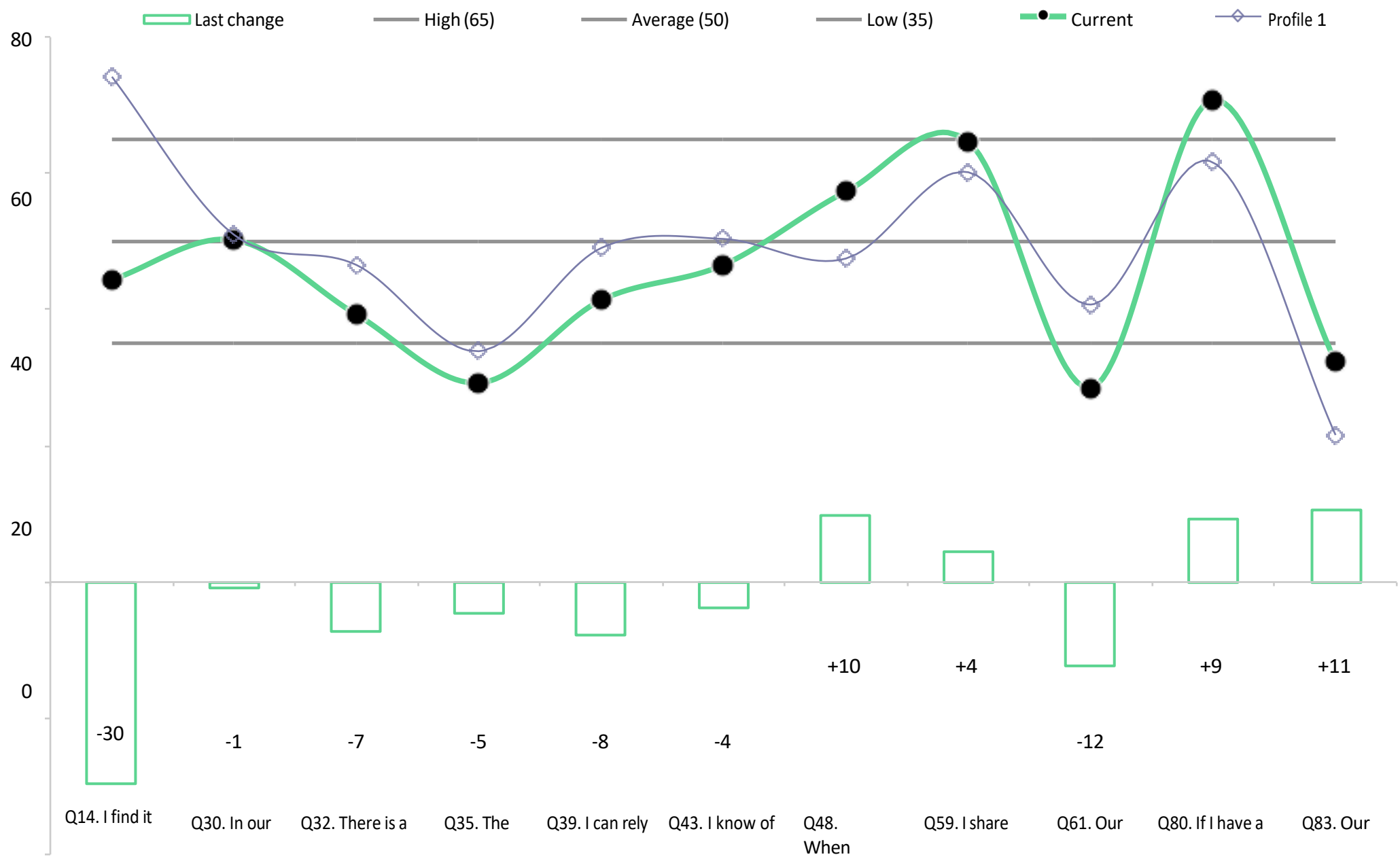
Loving Relationships Current Profile



0

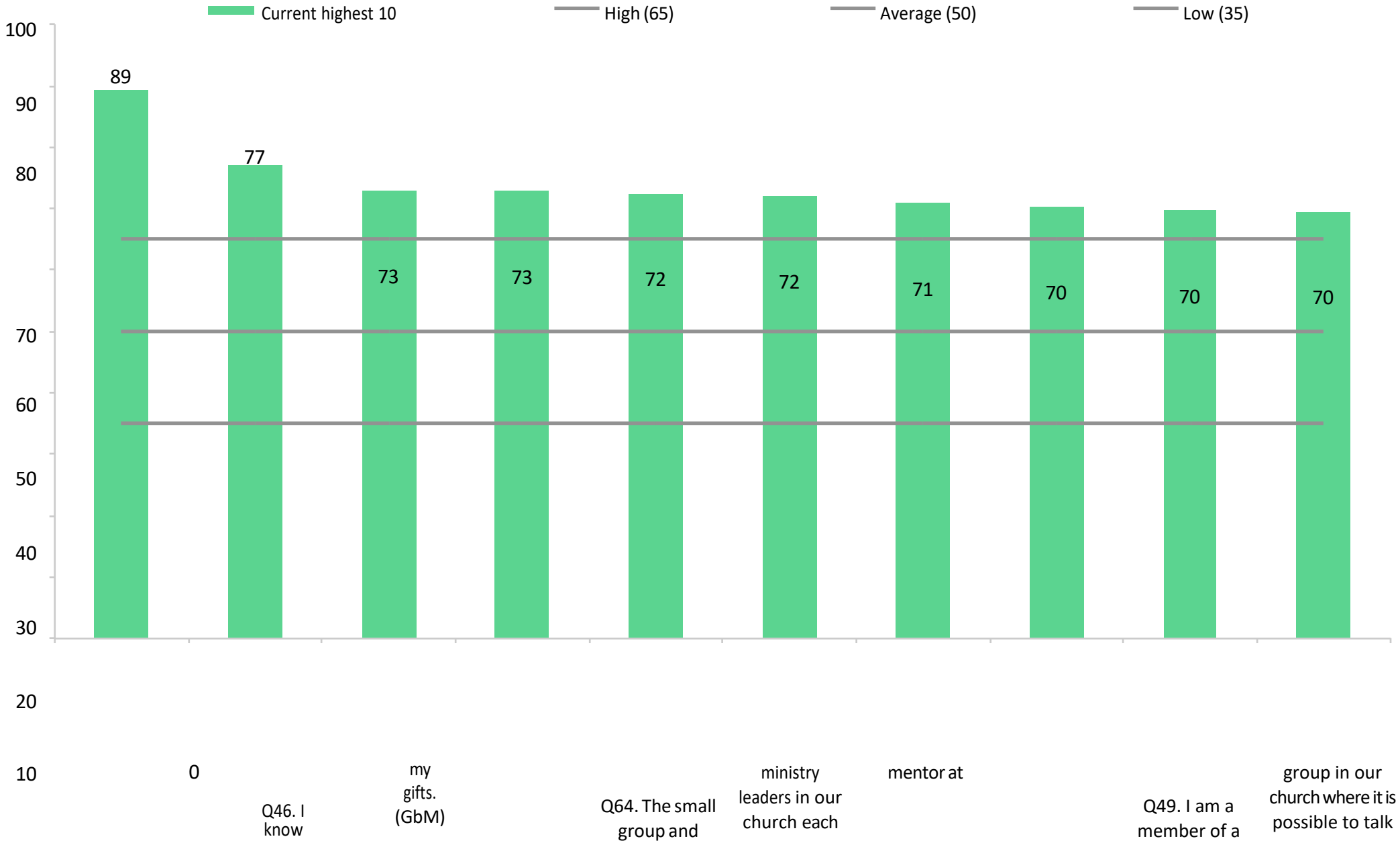
Q14. I find it easy to tell other Christians about my feelings.	Q30. In our church it is possible to talk with other people about personal problems.	Q32. There is a lot of joy and laughter in our church.	Q35. The atmosphere of our church is strongly influenced by praise and compliments.	Q39. I can rely upon my friends at church.	Q43. I know of people in our church with bitterness toward others. (neg)	Q48. When someone in our church does a good job, I tell them.	Q59. I share with various people in our church about my spiritual journey.	Q61. Our leaders show concern for the personal problems of those in ministry.	Q80. If I have a disagreement with a member of our church, I will go to them in order to resolve it.	Q83. Our leaders regularly praise and acknowledge volunteers.

LR Dynamic progress



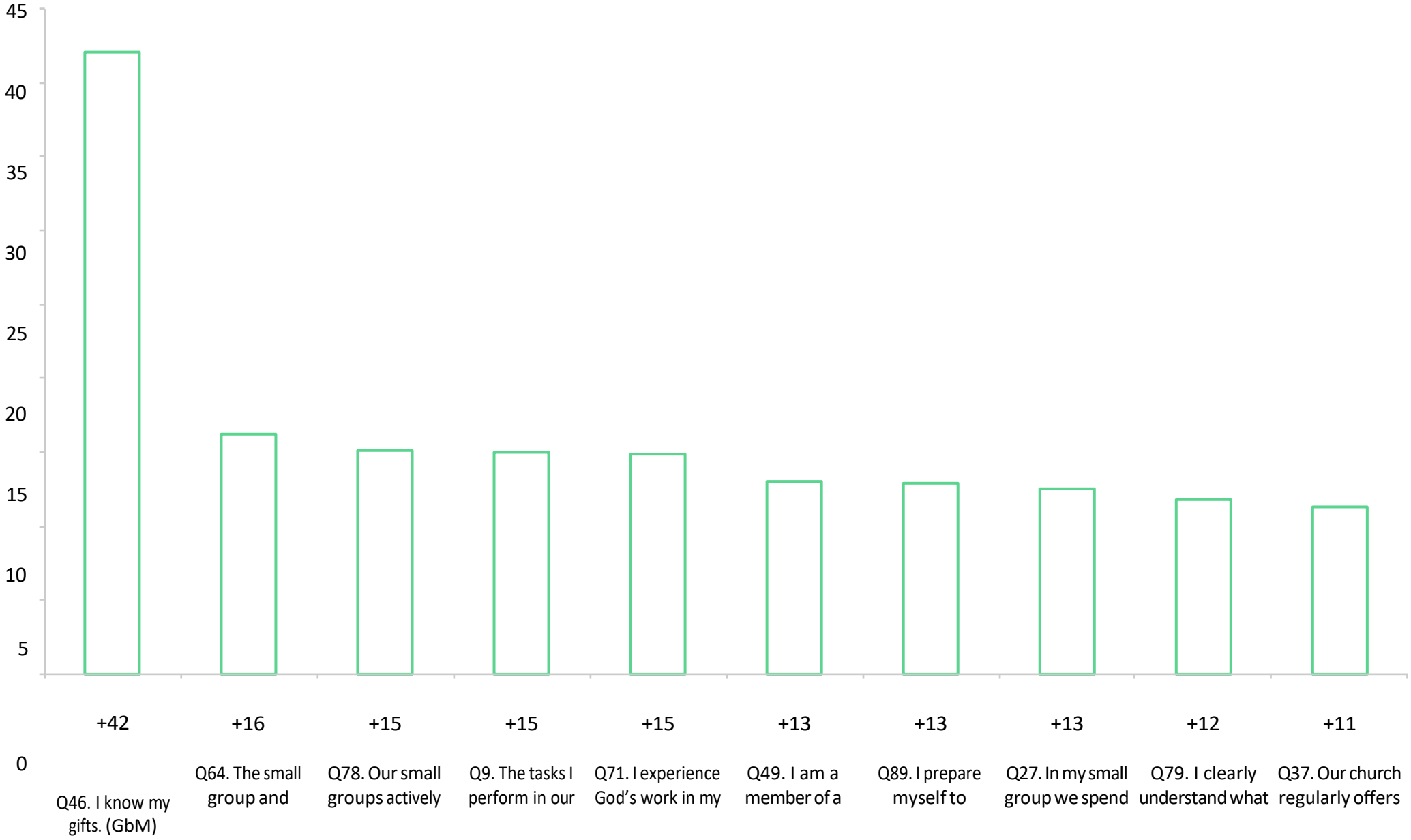
	easy to tell	church it is	lot of joy and	atmosphere of friends	upon my	people in our	someone in our	with various	leaders show	disagreement	leaders	
	other Christians	possible to talk	laughter in our	our church is	at church.	church with	church does a	people in our	concern for the	with a member	regularly praise	
-20	about my feelings.	with other people about personal problems.	church.	strongly influenced by praise and compliments.		bitterness toward others. (neg)	good job, I tell them.	church about my spiritual journey.	personal problems of those in ministry.	of our church, I will go to them in order to resolve it.	and acknowledge volunteers.	
-40												

Current highest 10



Q19. We encourage new Christians in our church to get involved in	Q71. I experience God's work in my life. (PS)	Q21. The evangelistic activities of our church are relevant for my	Q80. If I have a disagreement with a member of our church, I will go to them in	Q50. I can easily explain why I come to the worship service. (IWS)	Q8. It is my experience that God obviously uses my work for building the	Q76. The leaders of our small groups are trained for their tasks. (HSG)	
	least one other	about personal	evangelism		friends and familyorder to resolve it.		church. (GbM)
	person. (ES)	problems. (HSG)	immediately. (NoE)		who do not yet know Jesus Christ. (NoE)	(LR)	

Highest 10 changes from previous to current



ministry leaders in our church each mentor at least one other person. (ES)

seek to multiply themselves. (HSG)

church match my gifts. (GbM)

life. (PS)

group in our church where it is possible to talk about personal problems. (HSG)

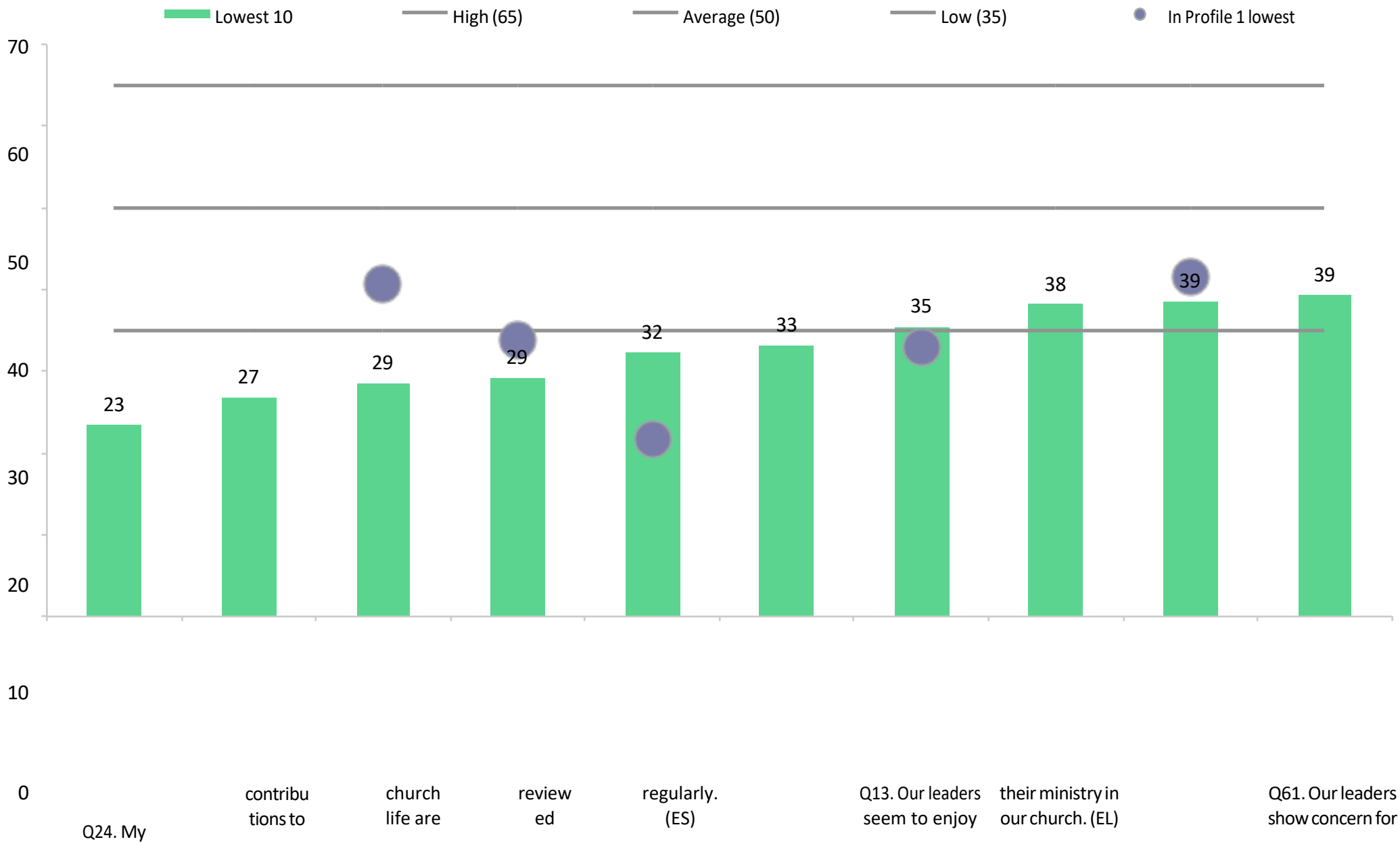
participate in the worship service. (IWS)

lots of time on things which are irrelevant to me. (neg) (HSG)

is expected from me when fulfilling my task in our church. (GbM)

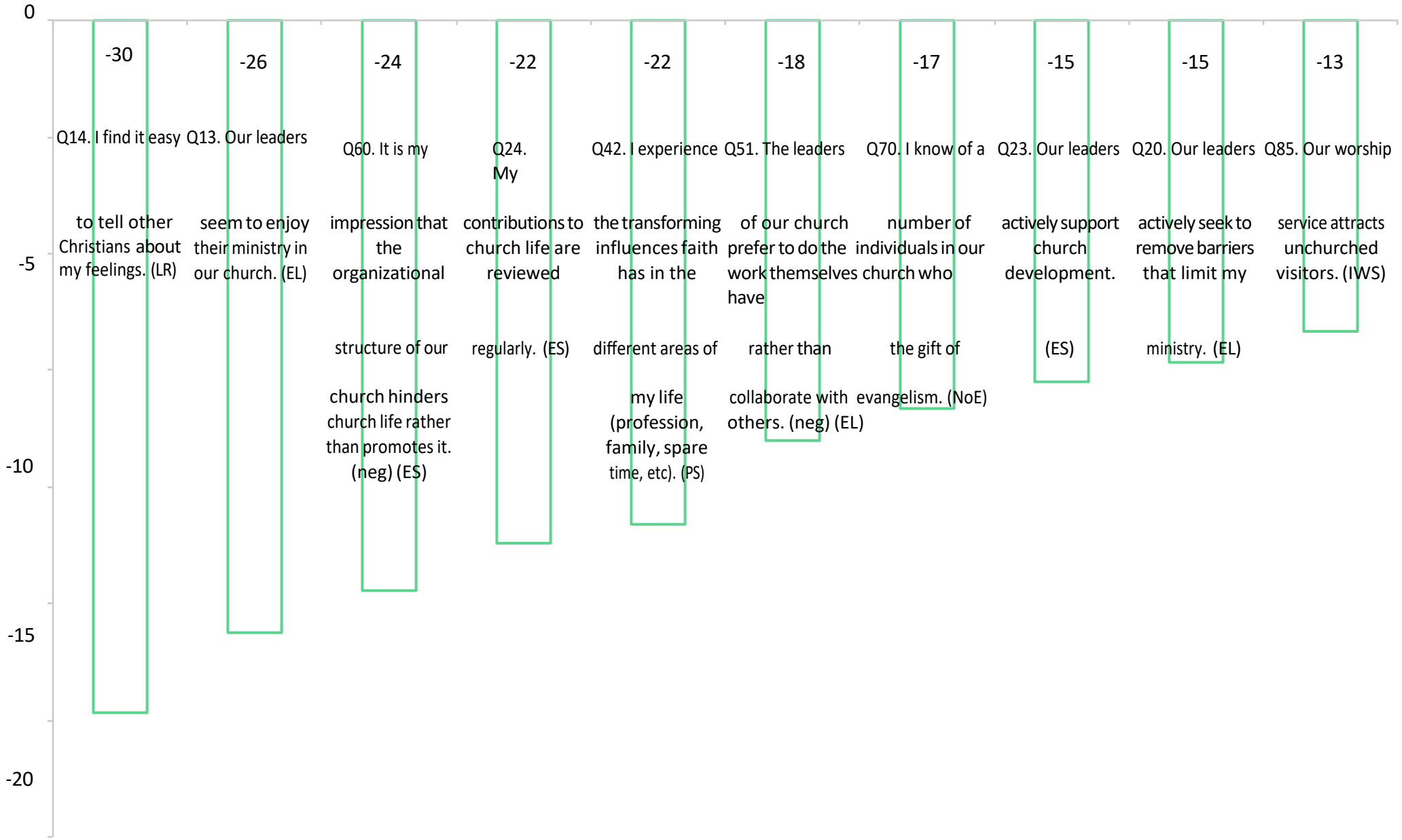
help for people to discover their gifts. (GbM)

Current lowest 10



the personal problems of those in ministry. (LR)							
	Q35. The atmosphere of our church is strongly influenced by praise and	Q83. Our leaders regularly praise and acknowledge volunteers. (LR)	Q60. It is my impression that the organizational structure of our church hinders	Q38. Many people are given the opportunity to actively participate in our worship services.	Q81. Our leaders regularly receive assistance from an outside person (e.g. coach, church	Q44. New Christians find friends in our church quickly. (NoE)	Q32. There is a lot of joy and laughter in our church. (LR)
			compliments. (LR)		church life rather than promotes it. (neg) (ES)	(EL)	consultant, other pastor, etc.) on how to develop our church. (EL)

Lowest 10 changes from previous to current

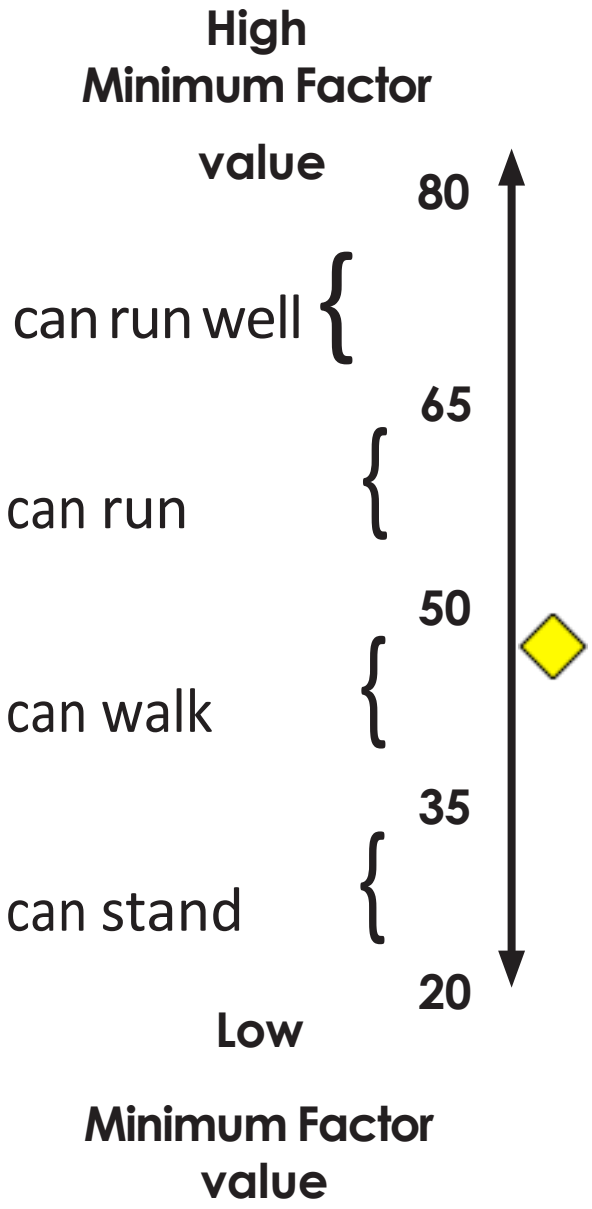


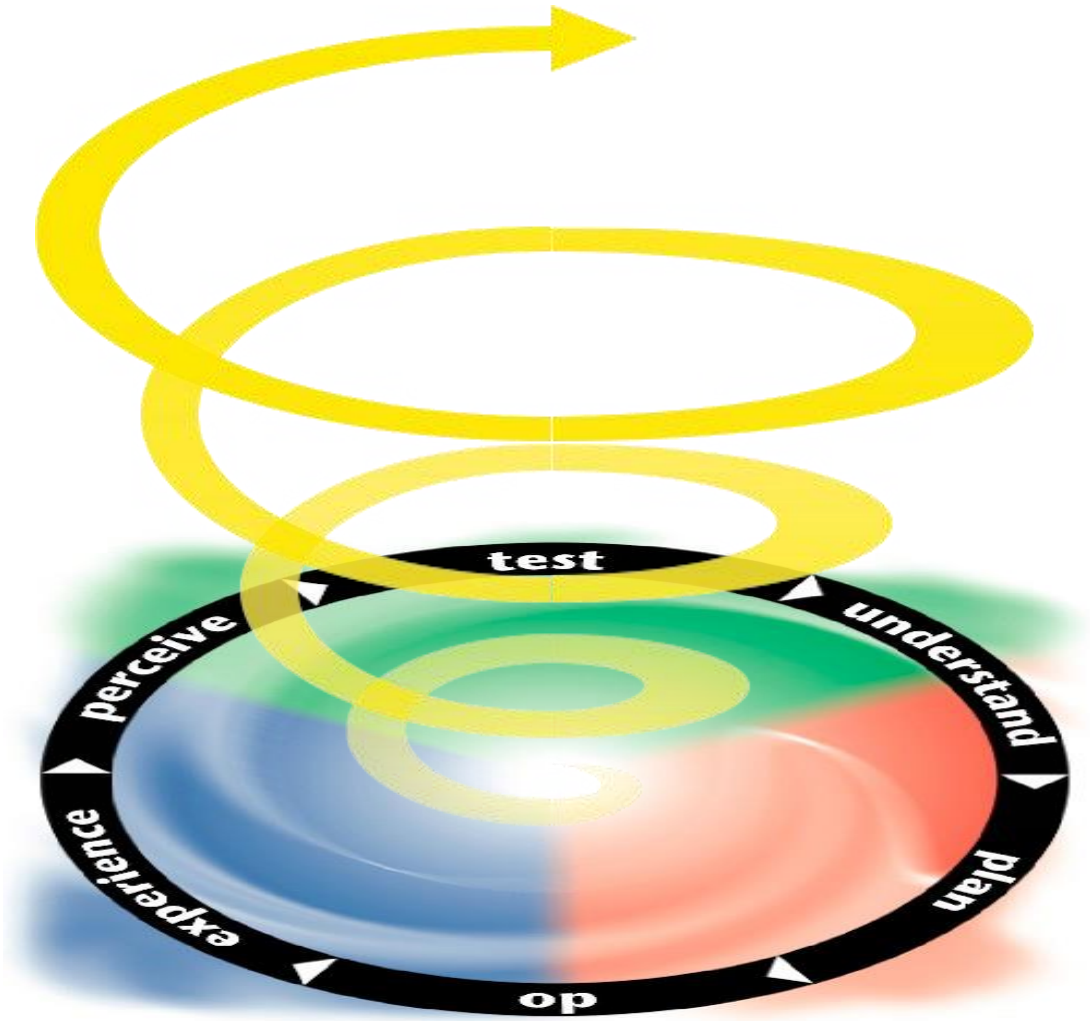
-25

-30

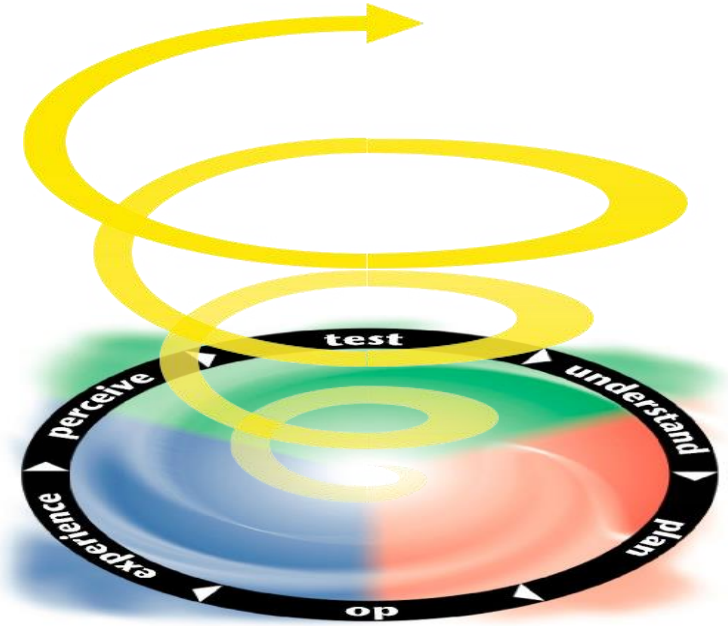
-35

Current Capacity





My Cycle Starter Plan



Our current challenges

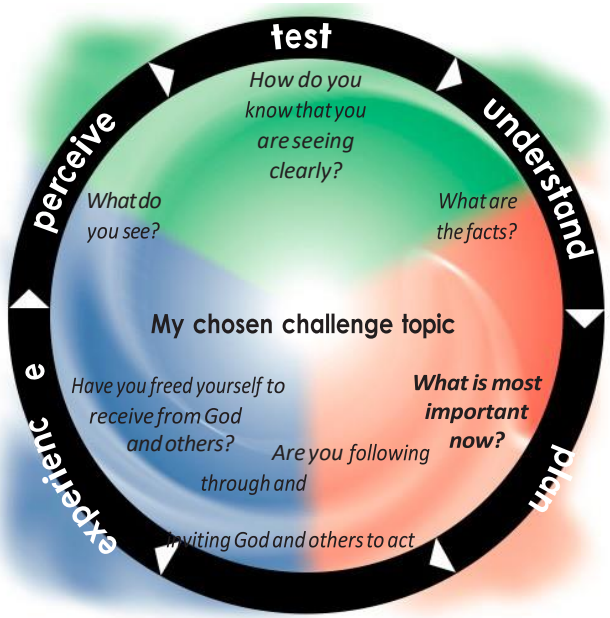
Fellowship Loving

Relationships

joy creativeness

pastoral care

"Closing the back door"



**Beyond reasonable doubt,
which of the above do you personally
need to explore further
for the sake of your church?**

APPENDIX D

2023 NCD Summary of Findings

NCD recommends annual survey so that you can align results with actions (what you did).

Build it into your annual planning cycle. Like an accountant, you don't begin your next year until you've closed the books on the previous year.

It's like an annual check-up like a doctor. Like a doctor it can show things that are starting to develop so that you can be pro-active instead of re-active. It's an early warning system. Things that we are doing now could take years to show up fully. You can pick up on signs of un-health before they become big problems.

We are 55. Still above average in health. No change. "in light of what's gone on this is great!." Covid, big church, leadership change.

Surprised that loving relationships didn't go up…but it didn't go down.

Anything with a change of less than 5 in either direction is statistically irrelevant.

5 qualities are above average. 1 is average, and 2 are below.

3500 churches in their Canadian data base. 70,000 globally. 9 Feb churches

Holistic small groups is in the top 15th percentile.

Talk about strengths first. You need to focus on your strengths.

Holistic small groups: "This is amazing this is top 15% of the country. In a very large this is essential." Your link between small groups and loving relationships was a realistic one, it may have not gone far enough."

"The small groups are holistic…they take care of the heart, head, and hands of your people."

"The people are saying that the groups take care of the whole person."

"You need to leverage your strength to raise your minimum."

"Highest 10 are all in the top 15% of the country. You would expect to see a large number of the top ten to come from your highest stave, but you have several staves represented here. There's a nice cross section within your highest ten."

"You need to name the barriers and then remove those barriers that are preventing healthy growth."

Bottom 10. 5 of your 10 didn't change. If nothing changed there would be concern. If there is no change then it means that you're not working on your stuff.

"6 of your lowest 10 are about leadership (2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9)."

Part of the leadership issue could be tied to the disruption in leadership.

In professionalized churches the paid people do the work. The problem can become over professionalization.

Treat volunteers like an employee. Same onboarding, same standards, same accountability, same reporting.

The laity can feel that they shouldn't do the work because it's for the paid staff.

Empowering leadership plays a part in loving relationships. Leadership is a relationship issue. We tend to manage people instead of getting into relationships with people.

Mainline churches score high in loving relationships (Anglicans, Presbyterians, and United). One reason Evangelical churches score lower in this area is because they tend to be judgmental and legalistic.

EP and ES structures went down.

EL went down 26 in leaders enjoy their work. That's an earthquake.

"Some of EL are in the toilet"

"In many evangelical churches the Sunday service is leader centric. Paid staff don't want to be seen as not doing something."

ES "a sense that the leaders aren't with us." Reviewed regularly as an example.

"24 point drop in organizational structure "What happened?"

Some really high ones and seem really low ones. The low ones seem to hinge on how people are connected to the structure. They don't understand how they fit.

"Sometimes as some things go up others things will drop because they become more noticeable" contrast

Story Guide: The bottoms didn't change that much, but the tops one did. People have grown in their faith as a result of small groups.

It's good that you're good at welcoming. Welcoming is an integration issue and were really good at that.

"Relevance is high. It really important that relevance be in your top ten. It's like gold because we are having a relevance crisis in our culture."

APPENDIX E

West Highland Ministry Assessment
2022 West Highland Ministry Team

Making Disciples (based on the church's definition of a disciple)

Does your ministry help people follow Jesus? How many unchurched attend per annum?
Fill in your answer here

How does your ministry create an environment where people can be transformed by Jesus?
Fill in your answer here

How does your ministry help people become engaged with the mission of Jesus?
Fill in your answer here

Process vs. Program Thinking

How does your ministry measure transformation in people?
Fill in your answer here

In what ways could this ministry improve in the area of helping people become engaged in the mission of Jesus?
Fill in your answer here

How does your ministry measure transformation in people?
Fill in your answer here

Do you help your volunteers to identify their spiritual gifts and to serve in an area that aligns with their giftedness?
Fill in your answer here

In what ways could you improve movement through the process?
Fill in your answer here

APPENDIX F[302]

[302] Vision 2020 was crafted by incoming pastor John Mahaffey in 2010 as a vision of what the church should look like in ten years.

VISION 20/20

Look! I have placed before you an open door.

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Conclusion – The God of Heaven Will Give Us Success. We His Servants Will Start Rebuilding --- Page 23

Appendix 1 – West Highland Organizational Chart

Appendix 2 - TREC Curriculum

Appendix 3 – How to Become a Church-Planting Church

Introduction – Workers Together With God

It has now been five years since we began our Vision 20/20 journey together. This dream and plan has served as our road map to guide us to a better and more Christ glorifying and kingdom expanding future. Each year at our Leadership Retreats we have endeavored to track our progress toward our goals, make adjustments as needed, and fine tune the things we originally envisioned. The time has now come for us to do a more comprehensive analysis of our present situation in light of the goals established and to identify other key areas that need to be addressed to insure that when 2020 arrives we will be able to say, "mission accomplished" as we look back with gratitude on fruitful years of ministry together.

The purpose of this paper is:

(1) To identify and analyze the accomplishments of five years of ministry.
(2) To identify 20/20 components/goals that have not yet been addressed.
(3) To flesh out 20/20 components/goals that were purposefully left undefined until sufficient Division Leadership was acquired.
(4) To identify and consider possible new components/goals that are in keeping with our mission to make the Word of God fully known and the People of God fully mature.

When the original Vision 20/20 paper was written I did not have the benefit of longevity at West Highland to help me. This did place a limitation on my observations, but "fresh eyes" perhaps proved helpful and able to see what others had not seen. With the advantage now of both longevity and "old eyes" I trust that the things written here will be proved even more helpful in realizing the fulfillment of our mission and vision.

When I began serving at West Highland I expressed my conviction that we had been entrusted with the great responsibility of evangelizing a vast area and that we were placed providentially in an ideal location to serve our growing city and region. After serving here now for almost six years I am more than ever convinced of these things and I see that God has brought and is bringing the resources we need to do this.

It is my conviction that the apostolic pattern of evangelism requires the teamwork of dedicated people laboring effectively toward a predetermined goal. It has been a joy to serve with you these past six years and to see how he has knit our hearts together with a unity of purpose. May the God of the impossible lead us with ever greater determination to do as William Carey, the great missionary to India once said:

Attempt great things for God;
Expect great things from God.

With 2020 before us and our Captain beside us,

John Mahaffey
Lead Pastor and Ministry Team Leader

I Have a Dream

I have a dream
That one day a church will gather here on the west mountain that will truly embody the love of Jesus.

I have a dream
Of a people incredibly diverse yet gloriously one, as the Father, Son and Spirit are one.

I have a dream
Of a Sunday when these pews will be filled to overflowing, not just once, but twice, three times or more - with people of every color under heaven; black and white, yellow and red - so different in race, but utterly one in mutual respect and personal dignity.

I have a dream
Of a community gathered within these walls - young people with adults, little children with seniors, singles with couples, the rich with the poor, blue collar with professional, the educated with the unlearned, the powerful with the powerless, the struggling with the competent, newcomers with long-timers, mature saints with new born believers – holding hands and uniting lives together – singing God's praises, hearing God's Word, and loving one another from the heart. I have a dream!

I have a dream
Of that same exuberant, technicolor family – streaming forth from this property – out into the city and communities around them – to throw their arms around it and hug it to their hearts - sharing with it the joyous good news of Jesus and his salvation with the poor and the lonely, the despairing and the addicted, immigrants and refugees, the unemployed and the disenfranchised, the sexually broken and abused, shut ins and the chronically ill, Muslims and Hindus, the lost and the hurting. I have a dream!

I have a dream
Of a congregation united in praise and waiting in prayer until there comes a sound from heaven, as a rush of a mighty wind and the Spirit of the Living God comes sweeping through this sanctuary like a surging river - convicting, cleansing, healing, refreshing and making all things new – until there arises from West Highland Baptist Church and all the city around it, a swelling song of worship and joy, binding heaven to earth, and earth to heaven

To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb;
be glory, honor, dominion and power,
forever and ever. Hallelujah! Amen!

I have a dream!

Envisioning our Future – Enlarge the Place of Your Tent

Five years ago we asked ourselves the question "What Should West Highland Look Like in 2020?"This question was asked and answered with the conviction that we believed God would be glorified through a church that wanted to be faithful to the Great Commission by making, baptizing and teaching a growing number of disciples in Hamilton. We recognized that this would require us to make changes in leadership and organization. We understood that there would be some pain in becoming this kind of church. We knew this would require us to be serious about addressing our weaknesses and taking costly steps to strengthen our foundations and reach our community. We prayed that a day would come when we would be able to say of our ministry what Luke said of Paul's ministry in Ephesus that all the people of our city "heard the word of the Lord… the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power" (Acts 19:10, 20).

In short we envisioned that we would become:

(1) A Church with an average attendance of 1600 people, with 1200 people committed to our mission and vision,

(2) and 80% of regular adult attendees participating in small group communities,

(3) that functions with a new constitution, a more robust doctrinal statement, a compelling church covenant, a Christ exalting mission statement and an effective organizational structure;

(4) a church characterized by inspiring worship,

(5) passionate spirituality and

(6) is fruitful at incorporating people new to the church and Christian life because

(7) evangelism is our heartbeat;

(8) that provides community sensitive programming and

(9) places priority in developing leaders and

(10) training young people for ministry through a well orbed internship program;

(11) fosters a dynamic student movement,

(12) impacts the large college population in our city,

(13) and strengthens marriages and families;

(14) while we grow as the Lord adds to the church

(15) and we share resources with other churches in our city and beyond,

(16) and has new and enlarged facilities capable of housing and facilitating the ministries and numbers of people envisioned.

Examining our Progress – Examining the Walls of Jerusalem

To realize the above 16 things we envisioned, we established the following 24 components/goals listed below. With each component/goal below is some commentary on what has or has not been done to date. This is to help us see the progress we have made and the things that we still need to do. With the progress report under each point I have also provided some **Questions to Ponder** to stimulate thinking and discussion among us. This is also to help us identify things we still need to accomplish.

1. Implement Dual Services in the Spring of 2010

After extensive work by the Dual Services Administrative Team (DSAT) Dual Services began in September 2010. While we missed our target date by several months we have achieved what was intended. We now have two fully functional worship services at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. There are two children's Sunday schools that operate simultaneously with the worship services. The Junior Church program was eliminated and the two Sunday schools were reprogrammed with components of both Sunday school and Junior church programs. In essence we now operate one Sunday morning program for children two times instead of the two programs we operated before.

Since the implementation of Dual Services our average morning attendance has slowly but steadily climbed. The dual services have enabled us to achieve attendances of over 1000 on an occasional basis, something which happened before only at Easter. There is still room to grow at both services. It is possible, even with present facilities to have 1000 people each Sunday. I believe however, that this pushes us close to the 80% rule.

Questions to Ponder:

- At what point do we begin dual services throughout the summer months?
- Would dual services at this point increase summer attendances or deflate morale due to much vacant space at both services?
- Is an average attendance of 1600 people an achievable goal after the construction of our enlarged facilities is completed or will we at some point begin to experience attendance restrictions because of auditorium size limitations?
- Can this be overcome with the addition of a third worship service?

2. Establish a Sunday Evening Bible Training Institute

Achieving this goal was done in tandem with dual services. TREC (Training and Equipping Christ-Followers) is now a regular ministry of our church. In keeping with our goal we have regularly used teachers from our membership as well as special guest teachers from local Bible Schools and seminaries to teach various electives. We have also offered classes that fit within several learning tracks such as Theology, Bible, Church History, Ministry Training, Leadership Development and Personal Growth, etc , even though we have not specifically defined these tracks in a way that gives congregational awareness.

As part of TREC we envisioned that all Ministry Divisions would have some kind of training component to foster leadership development and training for ministry within each division. A TREC committee was formed to administer Sunday evenings, promote class electives and secure teachers. This committee now serves with Dave Roberts and progress is being made in the development of curriculum (See Appendix 2).

Questions to Ponder:

- What progress is being made on curriculum development?
- What better ways can TREC be promoted among the church family to encourage greater involvement?
- How large is our pool of teachers and who are they? Who are potential future teachers from within the membership and special guests?
- Should TREC extend beyond Sunday evenings and became the umbrella for all ministry training in each division?
- How do we assess TREC's fruitfulness in helping us reach our vision of making the Word known and maturing God's people?

3. Officially Adopt Small Groups as the Primary Nurturing, Discipling, Fellowship and Pastoral Care Ministry for WH Adults

This decision was made at the time we adopted Vision 20/20. Initially some advance was made with Life Groups under Allan Gallant's leadership but this soon stalled prior to his acceptance of a church planting position in Thorold. With the acquisition of Dave Roberts as our Church Care Division Leader, renewed and more focused energy has been give to this.

When Dave began in August of 2012 we had just 15 functional LG's. That number will grow to 20 by the end of 2013. Dave has completed two LG Leaders training modules and 11 couples have graduated. In January 2014, he will begin another LG Leaders Group for training purposes. To assist LG Leaders with practical information and leadership tools the LG Leaders' Link is being produced once every quarter.

In addition to LGs there are other small group ministries that have grown at West Highland. At present we have four women's small group Bible studies that meet weekly. There are also 6 small groups that meet weekly on the Mac, Redeemer and Mohawk campuses. These serve a dual purpose in evangelism and discipleship. Dorrett James, deacon for prayer ministries, is also assisting Dave Roberts and John Mahaffey in the promotion of prayer with a primary emphasis on developing small group prayer teams. While this operates under the banner of Church Care it contributes to the goal of expanding our prayer base at West Highland.

Another development in LGs is the shift to sermon based discussion. This happens in 50% of the LGs.

Vision 20/20 envisioned 80% of regular adult attendees participating in small group ministry. Participation in small group ministry was to become an understood expectation among members and that it would be recognized not as a nice dispensable fad, but the core of the life of the church. At each New Members Class this expectation is taught to all new members. In my opinion, we have not succeeded in making an "ought to" a "want to." Furthermore, our present LG's are not generally characterized by a 'birthing/reproduction" mentality.

Questions to Ponder:

- Should we continue to place emphasis on small groups as the primary ministry to deliver care to West Highland adults?
- How do we determine and monitor the health of a group?
- How do we foster a mindset of reproduction/birthing in our Life Groups?
- What kind of on-going training is needed for existing LG Leaders? How often should they be congregated for edification purposes?

- What needs to be done to highlight LGs and increase participation in them at West Highland?
- How do we create a small group culture that removes the "ought to" and makes it a "want to"?
- Is 80% of adults participating in small groups a realistic goal? Does it need to be adjusted?
- What is the present percentage of West Highland adults involved in an LG?
- At present attendance levels how many small groups should we have?
- How should we categorize and facilitate the various kinds of small groups?
- Are there clear purposes for the different kinds of small groups?

4. Develop an Assimilation Track and Secure a Ministry Team Member to Oversee Assimilation
Assimilation was rejected as an appropriate word by those who thought of the Borg assimilation techniques in Star Trek – The Next Generation. This was quickly changed to integration. Vicki Jaster volunteered her services as Integration Director in the fall of 2009 and one year later became a remunerated MT member with this title.

Since this time Vicki has assisted John Mahaffey with making connections with all guests who indicate they have visited West Highland or who register their children for STAR Kids. Welcome cards are reviewed weekly by the Ministry Team and MT members are often assigned people to follow up with. Vicki encourages relational links for newcomers, attending Meet the Pastor, coming to Newcomer Fellowships (regular and ethnic), participation in Alpha and attendance at the New Members Class. She also arranges for membership interviews with Elders. The Getting People Started Team (GPS Team) was established to involve others in the integration process and assist Vicki in her work.

Once people become members the ministry interests of each person are shared with the MT and MT members then contact them for ministry placement. Vicki assists each MT member with placing new members in ministry. Time is also spent in assisting Dave Roberts in placing newcomers into existing LG's. This is helpful but more LG's are needed to insure better integration into the community and fellowship life of the church.

An "assimilation" track has never been put on paper but there is a general understanding among the MT members of the process. There is a need to put this in print and to include with it a clear line of expectation for people from the moment they come to Christ into fruitful membership in the church. Since 2008 we have received a total of 372 people into the membership of the church. This will be closer to 400 by the end of 2013. This is an average of 65 new members per year.

Questions to Ponder:
- How well are we doing at retaining new members?
- What are the obstacles to effective integration?
- Is there a need for a "first step" kind of ministry before people attend the New Members Class?
- Is there a need to develop/update teaching materials for membership?

5. Define Our Parish
To date no "official' decision has been made on this point. This was placed as a goal because there was much ambiguity in 2008 among the staff and other leaders concerning the area West Highland was responsible for.

The intention of the original planters of West Highland was to establish a gospel light house on the west mountain for the purposes of reaching the west mountain. Because of the growth of the church and

the fact that many come from well beyond the borders of the west mountain the church has become more regional in nature. I am not sure that defining our parish parameters is essential. However, it may be helpful for us to differentiate between our parish and our target evangelistic area or primary area of responsibility

I would recommend that we view all of Hamilton and its environs as our parish and consider our primary area of responsibility to be the mountain brow on the north, Mount Hope on the south, Upper Wentworth on the east and Southcote Drive on the west. This means that the area within these four parameters will become the target area for literature distribution and other direct evangelistic endeavors. This means that it will not be the practice of our church to deliberately do intentional door to door evangelism in the areas beyond our parameters unless we are engaged in a joint evangelistic effort with other churches.

Questions to Ponder:

- What are the advantages to defining our primary area of responsibility within the parameters suggested above? Are there disadvantages?
- What will be West Highland's future responsibility to new housing developments and communities that will be established outside of these parameters?

6. Develop an Outreach Team Under the Temporary Oversight of the Lead Pastor

It was understood that this would be embryonic of an Outreach Ministries Division lead by its own Division Leader. Dorrett James and Lorna Junker-Anderson were the key individuals who assisted John Mahaffey. During this transition period Alpha, Hamilton Challenge and the distribution of "welcome" literature to new housing developments were launched. With the arrival of Chris Kovac in January 2012 the responsibility of overseeing and developing the Outreach Division was passed over to him.

7. Develop a Staffing Plan

The goal is closely related to point 9 below, where I have listed the staff members acquired and the dates when they begin ministry at West Highland. Discussions and decisions regarding staffing have been largely confined to Leadership Retreats (see point 24 below). The calling of three Division Leaders for Administration, Church Care, and Outreach were the major parts of our staffing plan. Most of the other additions to our staff were largely replacements for existing staff positions with the exception of the Integration and College Ministries Directors. See 9 below for details.

A new staffing plan needs to be developed as we consider future growth, Ministry Division expansion, the need for administrative support staff within the Ministry Divisions and the possibility of further Custodial staff for our enlarged facilities. Consideration will also need to be given to an Executive Pastor which most churches of 1500 plus people need.

Questions to Ponder:

- See point 9 below.

8. Determine Which of the Present Ministry Team Members will be Division Leaders and Who will Serve within the New Ministry Divisions

This was accomplished very early in the first steps of implementing Vision 20/20. Lee Brubacher was the only MT member at the time Vision 20/20 was written to become a Ministry Division Leader. Yay, Lee!

With the arrivals of Don Crowder, Chris Kovac and Dave Roberts other MT members, support staff and their ministries were assigned to Ministry Divisions. Sue Montgomery, Vicki Jaster and Don Perkins and Oasis Women's Ministries, Prayer Counseling, Visitation and Builders are in the Church Care Division. Darren Patterson and Suzanne Kirsch and all STAR Kids and Student Ministries are in the Family Ministries Division. All custodial and administrative staff are in the Administration Division.

Questions to Ponder:

- See point 9 below.

9. Define and Develop the Ministry Divisions

The initial Ministry Divisions were Spiritual Formation, Worship Arts, Pastoral Care and Administration. When Vision 20/20 was adopted we were considering the addition of Outreach and Family Ministries Divisions. Within a year it was decided to form 5 Ministry Divisions – Administration, Church Care, Family, Outreach and Worship.

Administration

- Division Leader – Don Crowder, began May 2010
- Ministries Include:
    - Financial Operations
    - Building and Property
    - Oversight of Administrative Support Staff
    - Oversight of Custodial Staff
    - Administrative Assistance to Ministry Team and Ministry Divisions
- Deacons – none appointed to date

Church Care

- Division Leader – Dave Roberts, began August 2012
- Ministries Include:
    - Care Delivery – Pastoral Visitation, Stephen Ministry, Builders
    - Men's and Women's Ministries
    - Leadership Development
    - Adult Christian Education – TREC
    - Integration and Discipleship
    - Small Groups Development
    - Senior Adults – Joy Fellowhip
    - Pastoral care to all serving in the Church Care Division
- Staff
    - Women's Ministries Director – Sue Montgomery, began 2007
    - Integration Director – Vicki Jaster, began September 2009
    - Pastoral Care Director – Don Perkins, began September 2009
- Deacons
    - Gail Panasiuk – Oasis Deacon (served 2 terms)
    - Ron Peraziana – Builders Deacon (served 1 term)
    - Jim McCrory – Builders Deacon (served 1 term)
    - Doug Nash – Joy Fellowship Deacon (served 2 terms)

Family Ministries

- Division Leader – none, John Mahaffey is acting Division Leader
- Ministries Include:
    - Family and Marriage Counseling and Teaching
    - All STAR Kids Ministries
    - All Student Ministries
- Staff
    - Children's Ministries Director – Suzanne Kirsch, began November 2010
    - Student Ministries Director – Darren Patterson, March 2011
    - College Ministries Director – Josiah Hall, began September 2013
- Deacons – none appointed to date

Outreach

- Division Leader – Chris Kovac, began January 2012
- Ministries Include:
    - Community Evangelism – Alpha, Knock and Talk, Literature Distribution, Hamilton Challenge, English Among Friends, etc.
    - Missions – Provincial, National, International
    - Social Action/Social Concern – King's Garden
    - Assisting Ministry Divisions in their outreach events
    - Evangelism Training
    - Pastoral Care to all serving in Outreach Ministries
- Staff – none appointed to date
- Deacons
    - Jay Keddy – Deacon of Social Concerns (served 1 term)
    - Andy Clutton – Deacon of Missions (served 1 term)

Worship Arts

- Division Leader – Lee Brubacher, began September 2001, appointed Division Leader 2010
- Ministries Include:
    - All Music Ministries – Choir, worship teams, instrumentalists
    - Oversight of worship support - audio, video, internet broadcast, ushers, greeters
    - Pastoral Care to all serving in Worship Arts
    - Academy of Music
    - Assisting other ministries with music
    - Training for Worship Arts
- Staff
    - Administrative Director of the Academy of Music – Linda Garner, began January 2011
    - Academy Teachers – 13 currently serving
- Deacons
    - Ken Booth, Deacon of Music (served 2 terms)
    - Graham Lowe, Deacon of Outreach media (served 2 terms)

Questions to Ponder:

- Recall how God has led us over the past 5 years in calling people to serve on our Ministry Team and Church staff. What were the challenges we faced and the blessings we experienced?
- How soon might it be before we can call a Family Ministries Division Leader?

- Should Family Ministries be a separate Division or should it become a sub-division of Church Care?
- Is there any more defining of the Ministry Divisions that needs to be clarified?
- What kinds of administrative support will the Divisions need with the growth of the church?
- At what point will we need an Executive Pastor?
- How do we view the effectiveness of the diaconate in its new role?
- What needs to be done in the Divisions to develop deacons and enhance their ministries?
- Are the Divisions functioning as we envisioned them to?
- Are the Division Leaders multiplying themselves and equipping leaders to insure the growth of the Ministry Divisions and the avoidance of burnout?
- What kinds of training do the Division Leaders need as the oversight of ministries and personnel grows with time?

10. Officially Implement the Ministers in Training Program

This has been accomplished and is part of the overall emphasis on Leadership Development. The MIT manual is used as a guideline to develop intern's ministry skills, walk with God and relations with others. Summer interns are part of MIT but we envision another level within MIT geared to those called to vocational ministry. Those who are now in vocational ministry or tracking towards this include Shawn Woods, Joey McNitt, Phil Cottrill, Justin Roberts, Peter Mahaffey, Mary Lue Mahaffey, David Fuller, Josiah Hall, Ken and Selena Thompson. There are several young men who I connect with periodically and who have expressed an interest in joining MIT.

Questions to Ponder:

- Do we see MIT as being part of our larger vision to become a resource sharing church?
- Are we prepared to enter into partnerships with other churches, schools and mission organizations to train people for ministry?
- How can we provide the full orbed experience in ministry that a young man desiring to be a pastor needs?
- What kind of financial commitment can we make to MIT? Should this become part of our Missions budget? Can money given from wills be used to finance MIT?

11. Study Churches That Have Broken the 800 Barrier and Grown to 2000 People

The goal has not been accomplished. Until now we have relied primarily on information about large church structure that we have acquired through our own experience or through articles we have read. Once the building program is completed and we begin, Lord willing, to experience growth because of additional space, the need for us to study larger churches will grow more acute. My recommendation is that we identify larger churches, particularly those with 1500 to 2000 in attendance, within the Southern Ontario area and arrange for and designate certain times to travel and have interviews with key church leaders and church boards. In addition to this, we develop a library of books on the inner workings, organization and administration of larger churches and we begin to circulate these books among the leadership. Another possibility is to acquire the services of someone like John Baergen, formerly with the Leadership Centre (Willow Creek Canada) who has studied large churches and serves as a consultant to pastors and church leaders to help them transition their ministries. FEB-Central has offered one day seminars in the past for leaders of churches of various sizes.

Questions to Ponder:

- What is the kind of information we need from larger churches that will help us?
- What are the kinds of questions that we need to ask of larger churches?
- Who are the church leaders outside of West Highland that could help us?

12. Use Natural Church Development as a Means of Evaluating our Strengths and Weaknesses

Nothing has been done to date on this point. The recent feasibility study conducted by Janet Devries of Crossroads Consulting has given us some valuable information as to how people perceive and evaluate our strengths and weaknesses as a church.

At some point we need to begin evaluating church ministries to help us further identify strengths and weaknesses on an ongoing basis. Natural Church Development has conducted research on churches around the world and discovered that there are eight quality characteristics of growing churches. These are:

- Empowering Leadership,
- Gift oriented ministry,
- Passionate spirituality,
- Functional structures,
- Inspiring worship,
- Holistic small groups,
- Need oriented evangelism, and
- Loving relationships.

Research has shown that no church that wants to grow can neglect even a single one of the quality characteristics. NCD has developed materials that help a church to profile where it scores in these eight quality characteristics. The profile helps church leaders to discover which of the eight characteristics are weakest so they can address that area. Vision 20/20 was developed with an "NCD mindset"; that is, many of the goals were established with an understanding of the need to strengthen our church in the area of these eight quality characteristics. In one sense we have been doing what NCD does at our yearly leadership retreats and at times in our regular Elder meetings. I believe that our ongoing evaluation of ministry and discussion of the things we need to do within Vision 2020 would be well augmented if we used the NCD profiles periodically and made their findings a part of our annual Leadership Retreats.

13. In Concert with the Governance Task Force Create a Forum for the Study of a Board of Elders and the Redefining of the Diaconate at West Highland

The goal has largely been accomplished. Prior to Vision 20/20 the church board was already discussing issues of governance and management. Shortly after I became pastor, Dr. John Kaiser, former president of the Fellowship spent a day with the board to present his governance model. It was at this time that the church board adopted the principles of:

- Pastoral leadership,
- Board governance,
- Staff management, and
- Congregational ministry

In 2009 I taught on *Serving and Leading in the Local Church*. This teaching series underscored the above principles and underscored the necessity of a lay eldership, an Elder board and a redefined diaconate which includes women. This was approved and implemented in 2010.

Questions to Ponder:

- Have we adequately defined the differences between the above principles?
- How can the Elders avoid the tendency to slip back into managing ministry?
- Is there a need to develop a general job description for Elders and Deacons?
- What about the possibility of appointing Elders who do not serve on the Church Board? If we did what would be their distinct role?
- Are there areas of ministry that are not being managed well or not at all?
- See point 9 above for other questions related to the Elders and Deacons

14. Continue with the Work of the Governance Task Force

This goal has largely been accomplished and is tied to point 13 above.

15. Expand Our Prayer Base

We have sought to accomplish this goal through a number of venues. These include Seek Week, the establishment of prayer teams such as Emmaus Rd which meets on Saturday evenings, reformatting the mid week prayer meeting into the Fresh Encounters prayer service, calling for special evenings of prayer, etc. In January, 2013 we appointed Dorrett James as a Deacon for Prayer Ministries to assist the Lead Pastor and the Ministry Team members in developing prayer initiatives throughout the congregation and in the Ministry Divisions. The preaching series *Lord, Teach Us To Pray*, based on the Lord's Prayer was also launched in 2013. Its purpose was to help people who struggle with prayer. Work on expanding our prayer base is ongoing.

Questions to Ponder:

- What can the Ministry Team do to ensure concerted times of prayer together and to lead by example in the church?
- What can the Elders do to insure that the needs of the church are regularly brought before the Lord by them?

16. Expand Our Financial Base

Some initial work was done on this by Ed Brink and Don Crowder. This focused on expanding the financial base through things like estate planning, etc. There may be elements in the upcoming Capital campaign that will be helpful in expanding the financial base beyond just capital items.

A preaching series on giving entitled *Open the Windows of Heaven* occurred in early 2010. Systematic giving and tithing is taught to all who attend the New Members Class.

Questions to Ponder:

- What are the next steps to implementing things such as estate planning?
- How often should giving be taught/preached in morning worship?
- Are we seeing growth in giving? How can we measure success?

17. Develop a New Mission Statement and Church Covenant

West Highland understands our mission statement to be *Making the Word of God Fully Known and the People of God Fully Mature.* This is taught in the New Members Class and all who become members

understand its import to everything we do in the church. It now appears on all our publications, bulletins, website, etc. it is effective because it is concise enough for everyone to remember it.

The Church covenant has not been revised. The one in use is part of the manual used in the New Members Class and is part of the Membership Questionnaire filled out by membership applicants and must be signed by them. This covenant was introduced during Deric Bartlett's time at West Highland (not sure of date of implementation). It is my understanding that since then until now membership applicants are familiar with its contents. This is the only time reference is made to the covenant – when people become members

Questions to Ponder:

- Of what use is a church covenant?
- How can a church covenant be made relevant and meaningful to our community and worship life as a church?
- Is there a need for a rewrite? A more condensed version?

18. Form a Statement of Faith Team

With the need to meet the deadline for the articles of continuance this goal was fast tracked and moved into an immediate priority status. In early 2013 the Elders appointed the following to serve on the Doctrinal Statement Team (DST):

- John Mahaffey
- Michael Haykin
- Gord Heath
- Eric Montgomery
- Dave Roberts

The DST presented a first complete draft to the Elders in May. Discussions provided guidance for further revisions. At the June QBM a draft was presented to the members. In the late summer final touches were put on the document. It was approved by the Elders in September and distributed to the members. Three Town Hall meetings were conducted for input and interaction with the members. This resulted in minor changes which were approved by the Elders at the October 30 Elder meeting. The members will vote on the adoption of the statement at the December 1 QBM.

Questions to Ponder:

- How do we envision the new statement will be used in the church?
- What steps are needed to make this a didactic tool?
- Should members be required to take a "doctrinal statement" class?
- Who will develop the statement into a didactic tool?

19. Encourage Ministry Team Members to Incorporate into their Ministry Vision and Plans the Components of Vision 20/20

In the second section of the original Vision 20/20 plan entitled *Enlarge the Place of Your Tent - What Should West Highland Look Like in 20/20?*, there are listed several goals that are either unique to a particular Ministry Division or encompass all the Ministry Divisions. These include things like inspiring services of worship, passionate spirituality, good at assimilating, evangelism is the heartbeat of the church, leadership development is a priority, a dynamic student movement and college church, and

marriages and families are growing in strength. At the end and beginning of each year the Ministry Team has met to evaluate the past year and to establish goals for the New Year. These components of Vision 20/20 have served as a guide in the evaluating and establishing of annual goals.
Specific vision for Ministry Divisions was intentionally kept vague in the original 20/20 document. We recognized the need to have Divisional Leadership in place before some components of the vision could be fully developed. This rewrite of Vision 20/20 after five years is the first step in this process. The final section of this paper *Sharpening Our Focus – Men of Issachar Who Knew What Israel Should Do*, will seek to flesh out vision and ministry planning for the Church Care and Outreach Divisions.

Questions to Ponder:

- Passionate spirituality is something we want to see characterize the whole church. How can MT members foster this among the volunteers they lead and oversee?
- In what ways is the annual evaluation of goals helpful in moving us forward as a church?

20. Once General Agreement is Reached We Communicate Vision 20/20 in a Condensed Version
The following has been accomplished to communicate Vision 20/20:

- A lesson in the New Members Manual is dedicated to teaching prospective new members what makes West Highland tick and a major component of this is an explanation of Vision 20/20. This lesson includes the major points of Vision 20/20.
- A preaching series on Vision 20/20 was a conducted in October of 2010. In the morning services Vision 20/20 was approached through the series A *City to Win* from the story of Paul's ministry in Ephesus in Acts 18 to 20. In the evenings *Unpacking Vision 20/20* dealt with the rationale and the specific components of Vision 20/20. These messages are available on the church website and people are frequently directed to them.
- Occasionally at Quarterly Business Meetings reference is made to Vision 20/20 and updates are given on our progress.
- At the Town Hall meeting of November 3, 2013 an update and progress report on Vision 20/20 was shared with the membership.
- Occasional reports from the Elders in the morning services have reminded our people of some Vision 20/20 components including the need for facility expansion.

Once Vision 20/20 has been updated we will need again to communicate these updates and future components which have not yet been shared and clarified congregationally.

Questions to Ponder:

- In spite of the things mentioned above in what ways could we have communicated better?
- Are there things about our vision that we have not yet communicated?
- What are the things that are needed to insure clear, ongoing communication of the vision to the congregation?
- What is your perception of congregational "buy in" to Vision 20/20? Is the vision a part of our peoples regular praying?
- Point 21 below refers to 'Our Vision Goal." Does the congregation perceived Vision 20/20 as the church's vision or the Elder's vision or is it just the Lead Pastor's vision.

21. Adopt the Motto 20/20 Vision or Vision 20/20 for Our Vision Goal
The use of "Vision 20/20" happened very naturally. It is used on our website and by WH Leaders and family frequently in general conversation.

22. Plan for the Transition of Lead Pastor Leadership
In the year 2020 I will reach, Lord willing, my 64th year. While I trust I will still be healthy enough to serve, the church of the size we envisioned in the future will eventually need the energy and leadership of a younger man. Securing this individual and planning for an overlapping will provide a smooth and stable transition for the church and will not leave the church in the position of a lengthy search for a pastor.

23. Kick Start the Next Stages of Operation Rehoboth – Come Let Us Rebuild the Walls
The goal pertained to our desire to retire the debt on the land and to begin the building campaign which we are about to enter shortly. Our desire was that the paying down of the debt and moving to dual services should be seen by all as steps toward a building expansion in the future.

24. Church Leadership will Continue to Meet Annually to Evaluate Progress, Make Necessary Adjustments in Planning and Strategy, and Consider Prayerfully any Additional Staffing Needs that May Arise Due to Growth or as Needed to Help us Reach our Vision 20/20 Goal
Accomplished and on-going. Amen to this!

Sharpening Our Focus – Men of Issachar Who Knew What Israel Should Do

Many of the components/goals listed in *Examining Our Progress – Examining the Walls of Jerusalem*, the previous section above, have been accomplished and are now a regular part of church life at West Highland (e.g. Dual Services, TREC, Life Groups, etc). Others have been accomplished and require no ongoing maintenance (e.g. Defining Our Parish, Form a Statement of Faith team, Adopt Vision 20/20 as our Motto). Some components/goals have not been accomplished and it is understood that these remain goals and will need to be addressed in the coming years (e.g. Expand the Financial Base, Study Larger Churches, etc). It is understood that we will need to plan and schedule for these to be completed.

With this understanding in mind it is important now that we sharpen our focus and flesh out vision for priority areas of ministry and some areas of ministry that were not addressed in the original Vision 20/20 document. This section is a first draft that seeks to identify these areas and propose a game plan for how they can be accomplished. What is written below should be viewed as discussion points to lead us to finalizing vision, goals and ministry strategy. The main sections below will pertain to our Church Care and Outreach Divisions

1. Complete the Building Expansion Project

I am convinced that working the Vision 20/20 plan for the past five years has brought us to the point where the building expansion is now a reality. The progress made in other significant areas has propelled us forward to this point and given us confidence that now is the time. While the plans for building may be more modest than originally intended 8 years ago, they fit within the framework of Vision 20/20 and the end building product will provide us with the facilities we need to achieve most if not all of our goals.

A cautionary word is needed at this point. The building campaign will require a lot of energy and time. It will be important that during this time we not lose our focus which is to reach people with the gospel, baptize them, and disciple them into fruitful followers of Christ It will be necessary for some to focus their entire attention on the physical plant in order that others will keep the main thing the main thing. I am confident that this will happen and that the growth in stewardship, personal commitment to Christ, worship and mission will be part of building and renovating to the glory of God. A new, more functional and more spacious facility will be a great boon to the delivery of ministry. Praise the Lord!

2. Vision for Church Care

"Making the People of God Fully Mature." In some ways this phrase encapsulates what the Church Care Division is all about – Leadership providing the things necessary for spiritual growth, guiding people into growth experiences, and training others to be facilitators in this process. The overall vision for Church Care is that every member will both desire and find opportunity to grow in their faith relationship with Jesus and fall under the care of a loving fellowship.

(a) Life Groups

Life Groups are the primary context for:

- Connection (belonging, friendships),
- Community (acceptance, sharing life, care) and
- Spiritual formation (growing deeper in faith and knowledge, nurturing gifts/service, witness).

Because our vision is to be a church of small groups (not just a church with small groups) we see small groups as the primary context in which these three important components happen. This means we need to:

- Re-think our high level of programming. For a church with small group DNA, we need an expected model of involvement for all West Highland members. This model needs to be one that enhances commitment to Christ and the church but also provides individuals and families with the time they need for relational strengthening with family and friends, and neighborhood witness.
- Continue training of potential LG Leaders in the context of an LG experience. This models for the potential leaders the "hows" of conducting an LG meeting and the relational dynamics and care delivery needed to draw people together.
- Provide support and on-going training for existing LG Leaders.
- Establish the values and vision for small group ministry.
- Develop promotional materials and methods to enhance the profile of LGs in our church's community life.
- Clarify and categorize the various kinds of small groups we have at West Highland.
- Transition existing Church Care ministries (where applicable) to a small group model of operating.

(b) Pastoral Care Strategy

Primary care delivery will flow from within the small group communities. In cases where specialized care is needed and requires "professional" help these individuals will be guided to professional networks (for marriage crisis, addictions, chronic emotional/mental health issues) and trained care-givers within the church family (Grief Share, Prayer Counseling, Pastoral Visitation, Stephen Ministry). This means we need to:

- Do all of the above listed under Life Groups
- Identify and provide training for specially gifted individuals in the church membership who are desirous in using their mercy and help gifting to minister to people who need specialized care.
- Network with LG leaders so that they are aware of the specialized care delivery systems we have available.
- Provide specialized training for members of the Prayer Counseling Team.
- Require all Prayer Counseling team members to go through prayer counseling
- Through prayer and in time seek God for the emergence of other specialized care ministries within the church body.
- Identify and appoint deacons to assist in the development of pastoral care ministries
- Plan for future staffing in pastoral care
- Provide care and encouragement to all staff and volunteers who serve in pastoral care ministries.
- As small group ministry grows and the majority of members are cared for in this context, transition Stephen Ministry to function primarily as a parish service outreach ministry.

(c) Discipleship Strategy

This will require working closely with the Outreach Division, STAR Kids and Student Ministries. To insure that people are moved from conversion, to baptism, to membership and to maturing faith and Christ-like character we will need to:

- Land on a definition of discipleship along with a clear picture of outcomes – marks of spiritual maturity.
- Adopt/develop a model of discipleship that fits our context and culture, integrating a church-wide approach utilizing one-on-one mentoring, small group community and in-context training.
- Flowing out of this model identify a discernible "discipleship track."
- Evaluate all church ministries based on the priority focus of discipleship. This may lead to revitalizing some ministries that have gone off focus or cancelling those ministries that do not serve the goal of making disciples
- Communicate, coordinate and provide support between ministries to encourage them to stay on track with the discipleship strategy.
- Prioritize equipping as the central mandate for those in leadership; each leader to model mentoring and facilitate the multiplication of mentors
- Adopt gift-nurture and leadership development over position-recruitment as the norm.
- Train and engage a team of one on one mentors for initial response to new believers.
- Commit ourselves to "working with people who are committed to growth" by providing connection to mentors, small groups, ministries, and families that will best facilitate growth.
- Adopt/develop curriculum for children, youth and adults that assures consistency in covering the foundational tenets of our faith alongside courses of study that respond to the needs of our congregants in cultural context and provide resource development to coincide with the curriculum outline.
- Introduce "personal growth plans" for purposeful discipleship "tracking'."
- Assure a church-wide commitment to Scripture - preaching, teaching, reading, devotions, memorization, catechism.
- Continue to develop a "culture of prayer" as transformation is ultimately the work of the Spirit.
- Encourage "the paradigm of growth" in our publications, corporate gatherings. We need to share stories.

(d) Immediate Action

- **Life Groups**
    - Encourage present LG's and LG leaders.
    - Assure "quality control' in the LGs
    - Start a LG for potential LG Leaders and train them by modeling how a LG is to function.
    - Develop new LGs
    - Define small group ministry at West Highland by clarifying and categorizing the various kinds of small groups the church operates and what the purposes and outcomes are.

- **TREC**
    - Develop overall curriculum and implement multi-level and various length courses.

- **Men's Ministry**
    - Broaden the leadership base
    - Move this ministry in the direction of as small group model.
    - Work towards multi-generational events

- **Care Ministries**
    - Bring about cohesion between the various ministries – Stephen Ministry, Visitation teams, Prayer Counseling Team, Integration, Greif Share and Men's Ministry – so they see their contribution within the framework of a larger picture for care.

2. Outreach – A Vision for Missions

The Outreach Division oversees ministries in three areas – Evangelism, Social Concern and Missions. At present the Evangelism and Social Concern aspects have been functioning within a ministry plan established before Chris Kovac became the Outreach Division Leader. There is a need to modify and refocus this ministry plan and this will be shared at a later date with the Elders. At this point we want address the Missions program of the church in order that decisions can be made regarding where future funds should be allocated.

Our Current Vision

As you look over the missionaries and agencies we support there is no clear vision that emerges. To put it another way, if someone were to look at our list of missionaries they would not be able to answer questions like: What is the objective? What part of the world are you focusing on? How are you accomplishing your objectives? What is your strategy? What part does your congregation play in this endeavor? Without a clearly defined vision (along with goals, focus areas, etc) we will have no way of knowing if we are moving forward. To move forward we must first consider the present context of mission and church development throughout the world and in Canada

The Changing Face of the Global Church

In the early 1970's something spiritually significant but imperceptible to the human eye occurred in our world. For the first time since the days of the Reformation the number of Christians in the global South exceeded the number in the north. Today 75% of Christians now live in Africa, Asia, and South America.

To put this phenomenal growth into perspective, today there are more evangelicals in the nation of Brazil than there are in Europe. The Anglican Church in Nigeria outnumbers all the Anglicans in Great Britain, and it is the Nigerian Church that is largely responsible for stopping theological drift within the Anglican Communion. In 1980, there were 1800 known evangelical mission agencies sending 70,000 missionaries. Today, we know of 4000 evangelical mission agencies that are sending 250,000 missionaries. The major growth in the number of agencies and missionaries has not come from the traditional missionary sending nations in the western world. Filipino missionaries are now serving throughout the ASEAN nations and beyond into other Asian nations that ban the access of western missionaries. The Church in South Korea now has the largest number of foreign missionaries in the world and they have plans to send 100,000 missionaries over the next 20 years. All throughout Latin America and Africa the churches are engaging in sending missionaries to other nations.

All of this is cause for praise. The efforts of evangelicals in the Western world have produced this vast spiritual harvest and it has mushroomed into an international phenomenon. While all of this is true the largest unreached area of the world still lies within the 10/40 window that stretches across North Africa,

through the Middle East and into south and South East Asia. The second most spiritually needy nations are those in the West, particularly Europe where Christianity has been in decline for almost 200 years. Canada is in some respects very similar or not far behind Western Europe. One other fact of which we must be aware is that an estimated 85% of the 2.2 million evangelical churches worldwide are led by pastors with no theological training. Most pastors outside the West do not have access to Bible College, seminary or solid theological resources. Even where the internet is available, consistent access is often limited and online resources are unreliable. In other words, while the church has grown phenomenally outside of the west there is a great need, not for church planters – the traditional western missionary role – but for teachers to train pastors.

The Changing Face of Canada

While the evangelical church was spreading and growing throughout the global south the numbers of evangelicals has dropped significantly in Canada. In 1900 evangelicals represented 25% of the population. This fell to less than 8% in 1989 but rose to just under 11% in 2000. In French Canada the number of evangelicals is less than 1% of the population. Quebec is the largest unreached area in the western world. By comparison evangelicals comprise 36% of the population of Kenya. In Uganda it is 46%. In Asia, South Korea and the Philippines have 15% and 16% evangelicals respectively. The picture throughout Latin America also reveals a significantly growing evangelical population in most nations. Patrick Johnstone's *Operation World* gives an incredible analysis of the state of the church around the world.

The downward trend in the number of evangelical in Canada was due to a number of factors:

- The spread of liberal theology throughout the mainline Protestant denominations.
- The decline of spiritual fervor and evangelistic passion among evangelicals – the absence of revival.
- the rise of secularism
- changing immigration patterns
- growing interest in non- Christian religions

Over the past 50 years several factors have converged that have changed the Canadian landscape. An aging population (people are having smaller families as a result of birth control), and an increase in ethno cultural diversity (due to mass immigration as a way to offset our aging population) are the two biggest contributors to these changes. It is predicted that by 2017 over 20% of our population will be foreign born. The number of seniors aged 65 and over increased 14.1% between 2006 and 2011 to nearly 5 million. This rate of growth was higher than that of children aged 14 and under (0.5%) and people aged 15-64 (5.7%).

These above facts and global trends are cause for us to rethink and refocus our missions program. We need to ask and answer, "What should be West Highland's contribution the Great Commission within the new 21st century realities of the global church and the church in Canada?"

Four Priorities

In an attempt to answer this we recommend the following priorities to guide the development of our missions program:

(1) The Largely Unevangelized Nations of the World

This would include the nations of the 10/40 window, the Muslim World and the post-Christian nations of the West.

(2) Training Church Leaders in Other Nations

As noted above under *The Changing Face of the Global Church* there exists a great need for theological training for church leaders throughout the world. Many of these places are closed to traditional missionaries but people can gain access for short periods of time. LeadersFor with FEB International is an example of the kinds of things that can be accomplished in training church leaders. At present we are working with about 5 Fellowship Baptist Churches that are sending their pastors to India about once a year to teach 5 cohorts of untrained pastors in West Bengal, India. Other such opportunities exist in other Asian, African and Latin American nations. There are other organizations which do the same. With our multiple staff at West Highland we envision that other pastors could be involved in the same way.

(3) Church Planting in Canada

We envision several thrusts**:**

- **Church Planting through FEB Central** .
  FEB Central presently has 20 church plants in Ontario. This is the highest number ever and it is a good sign that interest is growing and advances being made. We envision the support of church planters in key strategic locations as being a mission's budget priority. We also envision that once a church is on its feet that the funds then be reallocated to another plant
- **Ethnic Church Planting within FEB Central**
  We envision West Highland will become an international church over time but we also recognize that with the large numbers of immigrants coming to Canada, even to Hamilton that there exists a need to support language based church plants that are geared to reach a particular people.
- **French Canada**
  Great progress is being made in Quebec. Within the next year there will be 100 French Fellowship Churches. Many more churches are being planned but they are in need of funds. It has been part of West Highland's tradition to support church plants in Quebec. When we consider how needy this province is we want to make this a priority focus area.
- **First Nations**
  Our Thessalon experience has opened our eyes to the larger need within the First Nations communities. In addition to the growing immigrant community First Nations population grew by 45% between 1996 and 2006. The rest of Canada grew by 8% during the same period.
- **West Highland Church Plants**
  This will be dealt with below under Resource Sharing Church. If this becomes a future project then significant funds will need to be allocated for this.

(4) Supporting West Highland Members Called to Missions

This is in keeping with our traditional approach. Over time we hope that we will see our members being called into church planting and to largely unevangelized nations as listed above. If the unreached world and supporting church planters becomes a top mission priority for our church the vision and call to this ministry will occur among us.

If these priorities are adopted then over time our mission's budget can begin to reflect this vision.

4. Healing the Heart of our Church

The process began by the Elders needs to continue to completion. The Elders charged John mahaffey and Sue Montgomery with identifying areas of concern that may be rooted within our church's history. This work needs to be done and then reported to the Elders and Ministry team so that appropriate steps

can be taken. In short we want to address our church "internals" to break any strongholds or patterns of inconsistency that can hinder us from spiritually moving ahead as a church.

5. Leadership Development within the Ministry Divisions
The growth our church and Ministry Divisions necessitates leadership that develops other leaders. Redefining the diaconate and having deacons function as assistants to the Division Leaders and Ministry Team members is an important step in this direction. Expanding the diaconate with capable people will be needed or the Division Leaders will not be able effectively manage ministry. This will be a difficult process for some. Division Leaders will need to concentrate their work with a smaller number of key people in order to minister effectively to a larger number of people. The Division Leader's in concert with the Lead Pastor will need to develop highly functional leadership teams within their Divisions.

6. A Resource Sharing Church
This is point 15 under the section *Envisioning Our Future – Enlarge the Place of Your Tent* above.

This is already happening in a number of ways both in finances and in sharing our personnel to minister from time to time in other contexts. What is envisioned for our Missions program would be another aspect of resource sharing.

Revitalizing Churches
In recent conversations with Dwayne Cline we have identified churches within our association that are struggling and may close. How can we partner with other churches like Hughson Street Baptist either to revitalize these churches or replant churches within the existing facilities? I envision that opportunities of this nature could become incubators in which we provide a wide range of ministry opportunities, including preaching, for people in the MIT program.

A Church Plant
At some point we will consider Church Planting out of West Highland and this would also fit in this category.

A Christian School
A proposal from Ken Hajas was received several months ago. This was tabled for future consideration. The challenges of a building campaign are now upon us but there is a growing need to provide education in a Christian context. Is this something we should consider to help serve the broader Christian community? Does this fit with our mission and our vision? This is something that we should prayerfully consider and keep on our horizon in the coming years.

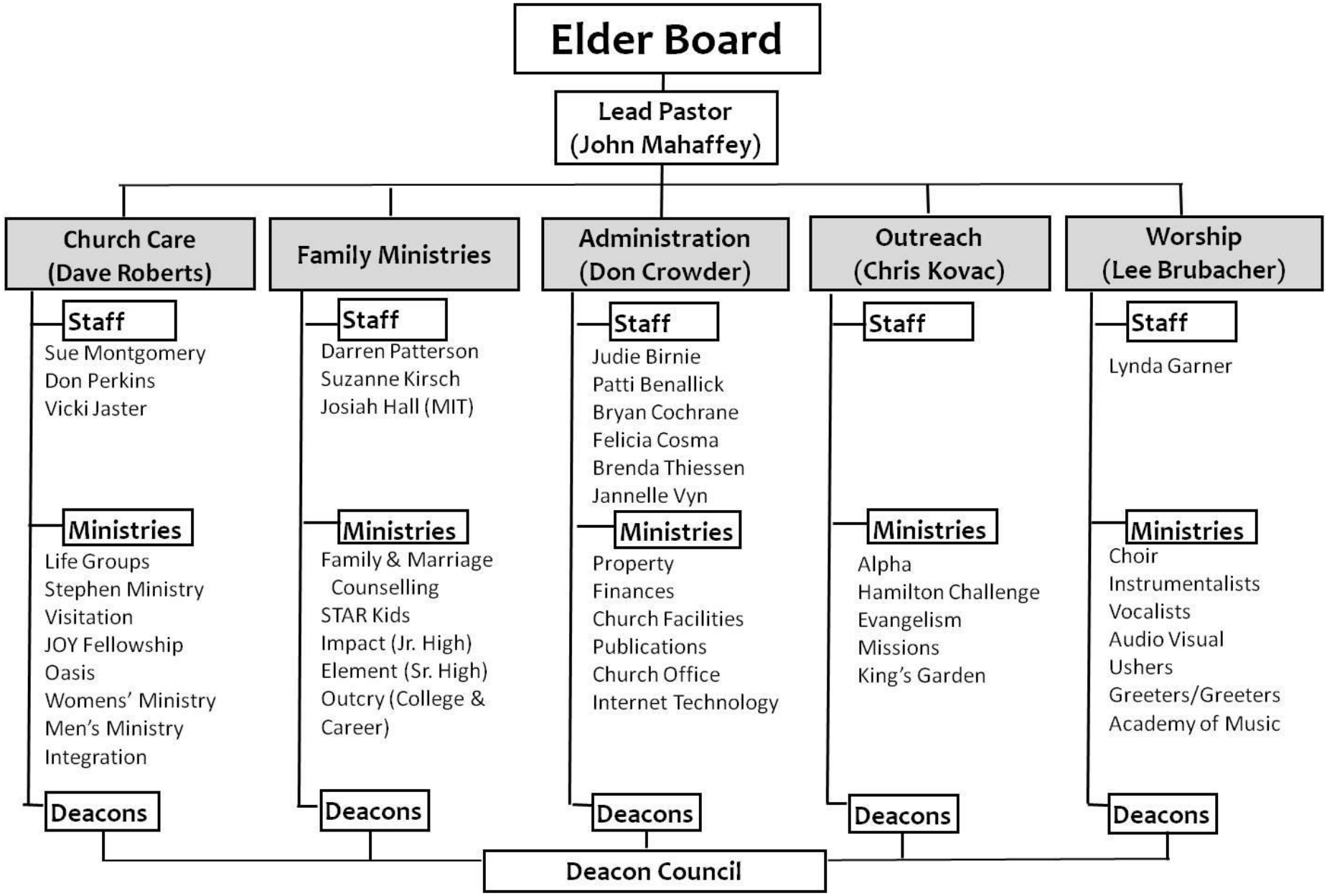
Conclusion – The God of Heaven Will Give Us Success. We His Servants Will Start Rebuilding

In the last two years the members of West Highland have voted overwhelmingly in favor of expanding our ministries and fulfilling our vision to reach our city with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The votes for Chris Kovac and Dave Roberts in December of 2011 to join our Ministry Team and provide leadership in two key areas of our church's life – Church Care and Outreach – was the first. The second was November 10, 2013 when 93% of the members present to vote enthusiastically endorsed the recommendation to begin a capital campaign with a budget of $6.7 million. These expressions of support to expand indicate that we are part of a church that wants to make sure that the primary purpose of Jesus Christ in the world will never become a secondary cause in his church.

This update to Vision 20/20 is submitted to you with the realization that we have much work ahead of us. Our city is growing. We are seeing people come to Christ and there is much evidence of the gracious work of the Spirit among us. But the field is vast and the laborers are few. Be that as it may, our God is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or think. I am convinced that if we have "a mind to work," like the people did when Nehemiah lead them in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, we will see the hand of God do amazing things.

The God of heaven will give us success.
We his servants will start rebuilding.

Appendix 1



Revised November 2013

TREC Curriculum – Proposal

Areas of Teaching	Class Options
Bible	
*	God's Story: The Bible from Cover to Cover
*	Walk thru the OT – History, Wisdom Lit, Prophets
*	Walk thru the NT – Gospels/Life of Christ, Acts-Rev
*	Understanding and Applying God's Word
	The Sermon on the Mount
	The Parables of Jesus
	Book Studies (x66)
*	Genesis, one of the Gospels, Acts, Romans
History	
*	The Reformation
	Church History in the Modern Era
	The Church Fathers
	The Modern Mission Movement
Theology	
*	The New Catechism
*	WH Doctrinal Statement (teaching version)

*	Worldview and the Christian Faith
	Christian Apologetics
	Christian Ethics/Contemporary Issues
	Prophecy and Revelation
Growing Deeper and Stronger	
*	Spiritual Formation (the Disciplines)
*	Our Identity in Christ
*	Freedom in Christ (Healing the Wounds)
	Spiritual Pathways
	Spiritual Warfare
	On Suffering and Evil
	Understanding God's Will
	Col. 2:7 Courses (x3)
The Christian Life	

Appendix 2

	Marriage Preparation
	Growing Strong Marriages

	Family Issues
	Raising Kids/Youth
	Parenting Alone
	Money Talks
	Faith and the Marketplace
	Conflict Resolution
	Grief Share
	Series 33 (Men's Fraternity)
Service	
*	Discovering your Spiritual Gift(s)
	Leadership 101
	Pastoral Care training electives (visitation, SM, PC)
	Sharpening your Interpersonal Skills
	Demographically specific training (Children, Youth, Seniors)
	TESL 101
Church Family	
*	Joining the WH Family

*	Life in Community – Healthy Small Group Dynamics
	Leadership in the Local Church
	Church Discipline
Worship Arts	
*	Biblical Foundation for Worship
	Music and Arts in Worship
	Worship and Liturgy
	Music through the Ages

Appendix 2

	Acts 29/ Sharing your Faith
	The Art of Neighbouring
	Hamilton Challenge
	Reaching your World Community
	Perspectives
	World Religions (overview, specific foci)

	Christianity and Culture

Note: (*) indicates an essential course for all disciples

Appendix 2

How to Become a Church-Planting Church

How can a church that has never been involved in church planting become a church-planting church? Many churches aren't sure where to even begin this journey. Some churches dive right into church planting by sending out one of their own. This process usually involves investing a significant amount of resources into the planter and rallying behind him. But this effort often ends poorly as the existing church frequently ends up disillusioned with church planting altogether when their ill-equipped church planter fails.

Sending out a church planter is not the best first step in becoming a church-planting church. This transition takes time. But there is hope! You can't become a church-planting church overnight, so don't be in a hurry. The following steps can over time position your church to make a great impact through church planting.

Year 1

Assess and re-define your church missions strategy/philosophy.

Many churches do international missions well. Other churches do local outreach well. But few churches model their missions strategy after the three-fold holistic pattern of Acts 1:8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

In Acts 1:8 we see three aspects to church missions:

- Local Missions: Jerusalem—ministry to our city, mercy ministries, local outreach
- Domestic Missions: Judea and Samaria—domestic church planting
- International Missions: To the Ends of the Earth—missions beyond our international borders

Many churches are involved in various parts of these three aspects, but few churches have combined them under one holistic strategy. Does your church value all three of these missions aspects? In order to become a church-planting church, you must believe that church planting is an essential part of what the missions call.

Need more convincing?

Tim Keller has argued that church planting is the most effective evangelistic strategy. Take some time and re-align your church missions strategy to include all three priorities of Acts 1:8.

Now that you have made a decision to emphasize all three aspects of missions, the next step is to allocate resources for each. How much will be allocated for missions overall? How will this money be split among the three different aspects?

When I was leading Sojourn Network, we encouraged our church plants to allocate 15 percent of their overall budgets to missions—5 percent to each of these three areas. Whatever you decide, keep in mind that there is no such thing as a church-planting church that does not allocate a significant amount of financial resources to this work.

If you accomplish these first two goals in year one, you have made major progress. Once you have finished these first two steps, you can now move on to years two to five.

Years 2 to 5

Partner with other churches in supporting a church planter.

What should you do with your newly freed-up church-planting resources? I suggest at this point partnering with others in supporting a church planter or planters. This process could include:

- A few churches that together collaborate to fully fund a church planter.
- Being a part of an association where you can partner together to support a church planter or planters.

Think of this work as a church planting mutual fund. Rather than trying to fund a church planter by yourself, look to partner in doing so.

Adopt and support an existing church planter.

Alongside step three I also recommend that a church adopt and build a relationship with an existing church planter. This step could coordinate with step three. Here are some ways to proceed:

- Choose a church planter to get behind.
- Offer financial support to that planter.
- Build a relationship with the planter.
- Look for ways to bless him and his family (consider budgeting to bless him and his family monthly in some way).
- Allow the church planter to preach a couple of times per year.
- Keep the church plant in front of your congregation as a part of your missions commitment.

Intentionally build a church-planting ethos in your church.

If your church has not been involved in church planting in the past, it is difficult to become a church-planting church in a year. Many members have no previous exposure to church planting. It takes time to build or change culture. Give your church and people time to make this transition.

- Be consistent in your financial commitment.

If you follow these first few steps over a five-year period, your church will have included church planting in you overall missions strategy, supported church planters, learned about church planting, and helped launch one or more new churches. The congregation has seen your commitment to church planting for several years. Now you are ready to move into years six and beyond.

Years 6 and Beyond

Do a church-planting residency with a future church planter.

- Devote 12 to 18 months to preparing a planter and then send him out.
- This person may come from inside the church, or you may bring him in from outside.

Hire staff with the aim of sending them out to plant after 3 to 5 years.

- Build a culture as a sending church.
- Recruit staff with this incentive.
- Work with the support of a good association for assessment, training, and coaching.

Brian Howard has 22 years of proven leadership experience as a leadership coach, nonprofit executive, church planter, lead pastor, and business owner. Brian has coached several hundred leaders around the world and is the executive director of Context Coaching Inc. Brian has been married for 20 years, has four children, and makes his home in Southern California.

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URL to article: **http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2013/11/08/how-to-become-a-church-planting-church/**

Appendix 3

APPENDIX G

2018 Natural Church Development Follow-up Summary
Recommendations
Wednesday, May 30, 2018

Present: Dale Laidlaw, Dave Roberts, Lee Brubacher, Jakob Koch, Bryan Cochrane, Sue Montgomery, Vicki Jaster, Felicia Cosma, Jannelle Vyn, Judie Birnie

1. Question
How do we narrow down the survey results in order to be presented to John, the elders and the congregation?

2. Many of the relationship points are presently being done through Life Groups
- How do we prioritize this more?

3. Comments:
- Make Life Groups more accessible – (i.e. offer them on Sunday nights)
- List "Small Groups" as a category
- More leadership training for Small Group in order to raise up more leaders
- Introduce the "Rooted" program which offers training for the next generation of leaders
- Offer short term introductory small groups
- We need pathways for people to choose in order to enter into community
- The progress path is: belong, believe, and behave
- Incorporate connections within areas of service - integrated within various areas of ministry
- make it part of the culture in every area of the church
- Serving is a great way to make connections
- Offer "first serve opportunities" for non-members (i.e. garden, café)
- We need to widen the opportunity for first serve
- Have each ministry document areas where "first serve" is available
- Clarification is needed for the ministries that are for "members only" (i.e. leadership roles are ministry only)
- A person in the First Steps class is considered "in process" and may start to serve as directed by a ministry team leader
- "Students Serving"- presently they are allowed to "partner" with a leader
- Have a lead volunteer with an accompanying volunteer – this helps to identify if they are qualified for the next step

- Make sure everyone is following and using the system - (i.e. check-in system)
- These are the results from the 3 main categories out of 10 recommendations:
    - Celebration (3)
    - Encouragement (6)
    - Serving (1)

4. Concrete things that can be done at a leadership level:
    - Monthly time built into MTM's and Admin meetings for thank you notes to be written
    - Creating an "intentional act" of being encouraging and thankful
    - Have Ministry and Admin staff attend one ministry meeting per month – plan in progress
    - Prayer for others - we need to indicate to the person that we are praying for them
    - invite others to come up for prayer with us on Sundays

    - Small Groups:
        - It easier to feel loved in a small group but not feeling loved in the larger group
        - How do we demonstrate that on a congregational level?
        - 34-40% of congregation are not part of a small group
        - There has been very little appreciation shown of small groups
        - Connections are generally felt in small groups of community

    - Testimonies:
        - The importance of testimonies - people connect to the story telling
        - i.e. John could incorporate in his sermons reminders of people of what people shared during testimonies,
        - People sharing testimonies from their life groups, video stories included in services and Website - have a "testimony corner" – which could be included every Sunday
        - Everyone needs a "cardboard" testimony - just a few words of what God did
        - Work on a church-wide spiritual gift assessment - committee already working on it

5. Where do we want to put the effort?
    - More encouragement – to volunteers and leadership

- Have John do a sermon series on the theology of “Celebration” - what we do and why - principles that we could learn

- Gospel means Good News - compared to what we hear all week - how do we present this to a person walking through the door - we need to start with the “hope” and “good news”

- Part of the year is already planned

- The ministry team has the tool but it needs the input from discipleship and alignment teams

- The summer sermon series on Psalm 23 is a good start

- There are simple things we can do right away to change the perception while we work on the bigger items

- Include stories, thank you’s, other modes of appreciation, setting reasonable goals

- “Summer Shout Outs” – on a Sunday thank a group who is working that day (i.e. greeters, café, tech, ordinance committee) - “we thank the Lord for you” -

- INTENTIONALITY is key

6. Final Comment**s:**

- The survey has already made a difference in making the team realize areas where we need to make improvements

- Dale will incorporate these comments into the next steps and send info to the team

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